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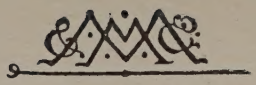
THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

VOL. III



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TORONTO

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY

AND THE WORSHIP OF THE DEAD

BY

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VOL. III

THE BELIEF AMONG THE MICRONESIANS

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PREFACE

THE substance of this volume was delivered in the form of lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge, in the Lent term of the present year. A good deal of matter, which had to be omitted for the sake of brevity in oral delivery, is here presented to the reader, and the lecture form has been discarded. In the next volume I hope to deal with the belief in immortality and the worship of the dead among the Indonesians.

J. G. FRAZER.

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,
12th July 1924.

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CHAPTER I

MICRONESIA AND THE MICRONESIANS

§ 1. *The Islands and the People*

The conception of immortality in Polynesia and Micronesia.

IN the last volume I treated of the belief in immortality and the worship of the dead, as that belief and worship are found among the Polynesians, the people who, at the date of their discovery by Europeans, occupied the islands scattered over the Pacific, from New Zealand on the south to Hawaii on the north, and from Tonga on the west to Easter Island on the east. We now turn to the consideration of the corresponding belief and worship as these exist, or existed till lately, among the Micronesians, a race akin to the Polynesians by blood and language. As the subject may be unfamiliar to some of my readers, I propose in this first chapter to give some general account of Micronesia and the Micronesians, reserving for subsequent chapters the consideration of my special subject, which is the Micronesian conception of human immortality and its practical embodiment in the worship of the dead.

Extent of Micronesia.

The Micronesians inhabit an archipelago, or rather several archipelagos, of small islands widely dispersed over the Western Pacific, to the east of the Philippines, to the south of Japan, and to the north and north-east of New Guinea and Melanesia. The name Micronesia, which means the Little Islands, is derived from the smallness of the islands of which the archipelago is composed, none of them exceeding a few miles in length and breadth. Yet Micronesia extends over an immense stretch of ocean, which

covers some fifty degrees of longitude, from 130° to 180° East of Greenwich, and some twenty-four or twenty-five degrees of latitude, from 3° South to 21° or 22° North.[1] The whole of the islands thus fall within the tropics, and, with the exception of a few belonging to a single group, all lie to the north of the equator, contrasting in this respect with the Polynesian islands, which, with the notable exception of Hawaii, are almost all situated to the south of the line.

The five archipelagos of Micronesia.

Micronesia consists of four, or perhaps rather five, large archipelagos, namely, the Gilbert Islands in the south-east; the Marshall Islands to the north-west of the Gilberts; the Caroline Islands to the west of the Marshalls; the Pelew Islands to the west of the Carolines, and the Marianne or Ladrone Islands to the north of the Carolines. The greater part of the islands are atolls of coral formation, enclosing lagoons and rising only a few feet above the level of the sea: we are told that a wave eighteen feet high would suffice to sweep the whole population of the Gilbert Islands into the sea.[2] But the whole of the Mariannes and a few of the Carolines are of basaltic formation and mountainous in character, though surrounded by extensive coral reefs; and these islands, though among the smallest of their class in the Pacific, are important in comparison with the coral clusters, all of which put together would probably not amount to three hundred square miles of dry land. If, however, the reefs and lagoons, from which the natives derive a great part of their subsistence, be taken into account, the estimate will be much enlarged.[3]

The monsoons.

The south-eastern trade winds blow from the Samoan to the Gilbert Islands and extend far north of the equator. In the winter the north-western monsoon comes down from the China Sea, frequently shifting round to the south-west, in which direction the most violent hurricanes occur. At that season large fir-trees, sometimes with their branches

[1] Rev. L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1862*, pp. 169 *sq.*

[2] C. M. Woodford, "The Gilbert Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, vi. (1895) p. 326.

[3] Horatio Hale, *Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition* (Philadelphia, 1846), p. 70; compare L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 170.

and leaves adhering to them, are drifted from some northern region to the shores of the Gilbert Islands, the most southerly of all the Micronesian islands, while the south-western storms bring bamboos in like manner from a tropical climate to the same place. These observations are important for their bearing on the question of the origin or origins of the population of the islands,[1] and they warn us against the danger of dogmatizing too confidently as to the precise direction from which the Micronesians may have reached their present home; since they show that Nature, by means of her handmaids the winds, is apparently almost equally ready to favour migration in opposite directions. And in considering the origin and possible migrations of the Micronesian people, this caution is all the more necessary, because that people is by no means homogeneous throughout the archipelago; on the contrary, it is marked by a considerable diversity of physical type and moral character in the different islands or even in the same island, and this diversity points unmistakably to a mixture of races. In my volume on Polynesia I called attention to the evidence for the fusion of a dark Melanesian population with the fairer Polynesian race in various parts of the Pacific, particularly in New Zealand and the Hervey Islands;[2] but in Micronesia this fusion is still more conspicuous, so much so that one of our best authorities on the subject, the American ethnologist, Horatio Hale, who visited Micronesia in the first half of the nineteenth century, remarks that, whereas we may speak of the Polynesians as one people in the sense in which we speak of the British colonies as forming one people with those of the mother land because all have issued from a single source, we can only speak of the Micronesians as one people in the sense in which we speak of the inhabitants of the Roman empire as one people, inasmuch as the various nations and tribes to which they belonged had been cemented and fused together by the general ascendancy and intermixture of one dominant race.[3] In Micronesia the dominant racial element appears to

Racial mixture in Micronesia.

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 70. Compare L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 414.

[2] *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 6 *sqq.*, 220 *sq.*

[3] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 71.

be the Polynesian,[1] and that element is naturally most prominent in the Gilbert Islands, which are the nearest to Polynesia and form, as it were, a link between it and Micronesia.[2] At the other end of the long Micronesian chain of islands the original inhabitants of the Mariannes, who were practically exterminated by their Spanish conquerors, are said to have closely resembled in features, complexion, and language their neighbours the Tagales of the Philippines, though they were somewhat lighter in colour.[3] Hence a good authority, L. H. Gulick, who lived for many years in Micronesia and knew the people intimately, inclined to believe that the Micronesian race had migrated to its present home from the Philippine Islands.[4] Others prefer to suppose that they hived off from the Moluccas,[5] the islands which lie between New Guinea and Celebes. In favour of this latter view it may be observed that an outlying Micronesian island, Tobi, or Lord North's Island, is situated at no great distance to the north of Halmahera, one of the largest of the Moluccas.[6] But by whichever gate the Micronesians entered into the wide domain of the Pacific, it is probable, and is now generally believed by ethnologists, that their ancestors came ultimately from some part of the Asiatic mainland, which we may provisionally identify with the Malay Peninsula. The occurrence of swarthy complexions and coarser features in the natives of some parts of Micronesia and Polynesia suggests that before the arrival of the Micronesian or Polynesian race the whole of the islands of the Pacific were inhabited by a dark people of the Melanesian, Papuan, or Negrito type.[7] This inference from the physical appearance of the people is confirmed by an examination of their

Immigration of the Micronesians.

The Micronesian language.

[1] According to Dr. O. Finsch, there is, anthropologically, no racial distinction between Micronesians and Polynesians. See O. Finsch, "Über die ethnologischen Sammlungen aus der Südsee," *Original Mittheilungen aus der ethnologischen Abtheilung der Königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, I Heft 2/3 (Berlin, 1886), p. 68.

[2] Waitz - Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. pp. 44 *sq.*

[3] See below, p. 270.

[4] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 414.

[5] Waitz - Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 43.

[6] An account of Tobi, derived from an American named Horace Holden, who passed two years in the island, is given by H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 77 *sqq.*

[7] Compare *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 2 *sq.*

language, which seems to be related more closely to the Melanesian than to the Polynesian branch of the great Austral family of speech.[1]

Physical appearance of the Micronesians.

After what has been said it will be readily understood that no general description of the Micronesians can be given which will equally apply to them all, and which will not require to be limited by many exceptions.[2] With this proviso we may say in general that "their colour varies from a light yellow, in some of the groups, particularly the western, to a reddish brown, which we find more common in the east and south-east. The features are usually high and bold—the nose straight or aquiline, the cheek bones projecting, the chin rounded and prominent. The nose is commonly widened at the lower part, as in the Polynesian race, but this is not a universal trait. The hair, which is black, is in some straight, in others curly. The beard is usually scanty, though among the darker tribes it is more abundant, and these have often whiskers and mustachios. In stature, the natives more often fall below than exceed the middle height, and they are naturally slender. That which especially characterizes this people is the great elevation of the forehead, and indeed of the whole head, as compared with its breadth."[3] Among them are faces which recall the European type.[4] On the whole, they are shorter and fairer than their kinsfolk the Polynesians, with straighter and less flattened noses and more hair on their faces; their countenances exhibit greater vivacity, and their frames are more agile and delicate.[5] Ethnologists are not agreed as to variation in colour among the different members of the Micronesian race; for whereas Horatio Hale tells us that the fairer people are in the west and the darker in the east,[6]

[1] W. Müller, *Yap* (Hamburg, 1917–1918), p. 11 (forming part of *Ergebnisse der Südsee Expedition, 1908–1910*, herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. G. Thilenius). The language of the Marshall Islanders is assigned by Father Erdland, without qualification, to the Melanesian family. See A. Erdland, *Die Marshall-Insulaner* (Münster i. W., 1914), p. 147.

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 71.

[3] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 71.

[4] Sir Edward B. Tylor, *Anthropology*, p. 102.

[5] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 416; J. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, pp. 504 *sq.* On the other hand, the writer (C. T.) of the article "Micronesia" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, xvi. p. 256, affirms that the Micronesians are somewhat darker than the Polynesians.

[6] *Op. cit.* p. 71.

Keane on the contrary affirms that the colour "appears, going eastwards, to shade off from the dark brown of the Pelew and Caroline Islanders to the light brown of the Marshall and Gilbert groups,"[1] and speaking of the Caroline Islands, which extend for more than fifteen hundred miles from west to east, Mr. F. W. Christian tells us that "the western islanders are much the darker and their language the more strange and barbarous."[2]

Character of the Micronesians.

The character of the Micronesian people varies with the racial element, but on the whole it is depicted in a very amiable light by our authorities. The American ethnologist, Horatio Hale, goes so far as to say that in point of character the Micronesians will compare advantageously with any other people, whether savage or civilized. Their most pleasing and, at the same time, their most striking trait is a certain natural kindliness and goodness of heart, to which all their visitors, of every country and disposition, bear similar testimony. Voyagers of many different nations who have explored many islands of this widely scattered archipelago have had occasion to remark the sweetness of temper and the absence of any harsh feelings which characterize the inhabitants. The concordant evidence of so many witnesses can leave no doubt that the Micronesians are, for the most part, a kind, amiable, and gentle race.[3] At the same time this description, like all other general statements applied to this people of mixed blood, is liable to particular exceptions. It has been observed that kindness of heart is less apparent in the natives of those small isolated coral islands where the supply of food is scanty, and where the frequent pressure of actual want produces in the people a hard and unfeeling disposition. Those tribes, too, among whom a partial infusion of Melanesian blood betrays itself in the features and complexion, are found to partake, more or less, of the ferocity natural to that race.[4]

Like the Polynesians, the natives of Micronesia are very intelligent, sociable, and enterprising. A constant com-

[1] A. H. Keane, *Man Past and Present*, revised and largely re-written by A. Hingston Quiggin and A. C. Haddon (Cambridge, 1920), p. 551.

[2] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 105.

[3] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 71 *sq.*

[4] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 72.

munication is kept up among the various groups and islands. They are excellent navigators, governing their courses by observation of the stars with great accuracy.[1] On the whole they are a pacific people; on many of the coral islands a perpetual peace prevailed. But on some of the high islands, where the population was divided into several tribes, wars occasionally occurred, but they were seldom destructive. In all cases it was deemed necessary for the aggressors to send word by a herald of their intention to attack, in order that their enemies might be ready to stand on their defence. This chivalrous rule is said to have been observed in the Pelew Islands and some of the Carolines.[2] On the other hand the Gilbert Islanders, who in spite of their Polynesian affinities appear to have a strong dash of Melanesian blood,[3] exhibited a decided disposition for warlike pursuits, and ferocity is said by Commodore Wilkes to have been the most predominant trait in their character.[4]

Navigation.

Wars.

A remarkable feature in the social life of the Micronesians is the high consideration accorded to women. In all the groups the women do comparatively little work, and that only of the lightest kind. Ill-treatment of a wife by her husband is almost unknown.[5] Indeed, in some respects the women may be described as the social superiors of the men; for in many of the islands the system of mother-kin prevails, in virtue of which descent is traced and property descends through the mothers instead of through the fathers. This system, for example, prevails in the Marshall and Caroline Islands,[6] and it attains its greatest height in the Pelew Islands, in regard to which our principal authority, the Polish ethnographer Kubary, speaks of "the predominance of feminine influence in the social condition of the people" and asserts without qualification that the women are politically and socially superior to the men.[7]

High position of women.

Another remarkable feature in the social life of the

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 72, 73.
[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 72.
[3] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 93.
[4] Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition* (New York, 1851), v. 55, 61.
[5] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 72.
[6] A. Erdland, *Die Marshall Insulaner* (Münster i. W., 1914), p. 99; F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 113.
[7] *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, ii. 205 *sq.*, with the references to the authorities. For the evidence of mother-kin in the other islands see below.

Exogamous clans with female descent.

Micronesians is the division of the population, in many islands, into exogamous clans with descent in the female line: in other words, no man may marry a woman of his own clan, and the children belong to the clan of their mother, not to the clan of their father. This archaic social system prevails in the Pelew Archipelago,[1] but it occurs also in other groups.[2] It is one of the features which most strikingly distinguish the social institutions of Micronesia from those of Polynesia, where mother-kin was rare and exogamy almost unknown.[3]

Three social ranks.

The distinction of rank was rigidly observed in Micronesia. With some local exceptions each community was usually composed of three ranks, namely, an upper class of high chiefs, a middle class of inferior nobles, and a lowest class of commoners. So strictly were the social ranks marked off from each other that they are said to have resembled castes.[4] According to Hale, the social superiority of the nobles did not rest, as in Polynesia, largely upon the institution of

Taboo.

taboo;[5] indeed Commodore Wilkes observes that "the great and marked distinction between these natives and those of Polynesia is the absence of the taboo system, or any laws or prohibitions under the control of the priest, or chiefs, that are believed to emanate from their gods."[6] But this supposed absence of taboo in Micronesia has been strongly denied by Mr. L. H. Gulick, who, through his long residence in the islands, had ample means of forming an opinion on the subject. He says: "I do not appreciate the statements

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 35 *sq.* See further, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, Third Edition, ii. 204 *sqq.*

[2] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 113 *sq.*; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, xvi. 256. Gulick speaks of "the system of clanship found in the Marshall and Caroline Islands, with all its attendant social and political complications" ("Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 416), but he does not mention the rule of exogamy; elsewhere (p. 303) he expressly tells us that in both groups descent is counted through the mother. The rule of exogamy in the Carolines is expressly mentioned by Mr. F. W. Christian.

[3] However, in Tonga nobility was traced in the female line, and in the Hervey Islands the tribes are said to have been exogamous of old. See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 75 *sq.*, 223.

[4] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 73; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, xvi. 256.

[5] H. Hale, *l.c.*

[6] Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, v. 85.

of almost every voyager, that the taboo system is unknown in Micronesia, and have been much puzzled to know what was meant. There may not be the same outrageous and idolatrous exercises of the tabooing power; but taboos innumerable exist. They relate to every imaginable relationship of life—to birth and death, to eating and sleeping, to talking and fighting, etc. etc. Much of this might by some be spoken of as mere national habit and custom; but there are taboos at certain times imposed, and again removed, at the will of the priestly and chiefish ones, who hold communication with the spiritual world; and the power of tabooing certain localities, certain houses and trees, is as much exercised in Micronesia. The idea of taboo is, it seems to me, as complete in the Micronesian's mind as in that of any other of the Pacific islanders."[1] In the Caroline Islands, Mr. F. W. Christian noted "the *Charaui* or Tabu, a series of solemn prohibitions defending life and property and enjoining the due performance of numerous religious observances."[2]

Drinking of kava.

Another erroneous distinction which has been often drawn between the Micronesians and the Polynesians is the alleged absence among the Micronesians of the habit of drinking kava, the favourite beverage of the Polynesians. For example, the French voyager Duperrey reported that although they had the plant in Kusaie, one of the Carolines, they only used the leaves, whereas, according to Mr. Gulick, no islanders ever made more use of the kava root than the natives of Kusaie and other islands of the Caroline archipelago.[3] From another voyager we learn that in the island of Kusaie the brewing and drinking of kava were conducted with a solemn ceremony which appeared to be bound up with the religious ideas and customs of the people, and in front of the hearth in the houses of the chiefs might regularly be seen a press, resembling a sunken grave-stone, which served to extract the juice from the root.[4] For in

[1] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 417.

[2] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 114.

[3] L. H. Gulick, *l.c.*

[4] F. H. von Kittlitz, *Denkwürdigkeiten einer Reise nach dem russischen Amerika, nach Mikronesien und durch Kamtschatka* (Gotha, 1858), i. 374 *sq.*, ii. 52.

the Caroline Islands the kava roots were not chewed, as in Polynesia; they were pounded on a large stone, and after being moistened with water the juice was squeezed out into small cups made of coco-nut shells, which were passed round by attendants to the chiefs. The first cup was presented to the highest chief, or to the chief priest, if he were present, who muttered some prayers over it before draining the cup.[1] In Ponape, one of the principal of the Caroline Islands, the drinking of kava was carried to excess.[2] In Yap, another of the Caroline Islands, the betel-nut tree, a beautiful slender palm, was cultivated with the greatest care; the nuts were pulled before they were ripe, and they were chewed, with the usual condiments, to wit, lime and aromatic leaves, by both sexes.[3] The chewing of betel was customary also in the Pelew and Marianne Islands.[4]

Chewing of betel.

Houses.

The houses of the Micronesians are substantially built of wood. In the Marianne Islands they are said by some authorities to have been elevated on stone pillars about a fathom high, and the walls were covered with fine mats.[5] The best houses are reported to have been found in the Carolines, where they often stood on a foundation of coral blocks several feet high. The whole framework was made of squared timber, and the uprights were all morticed into the wall-plates. The thatch consisted of pandanus leaves sewed on reeds. Houses thus constructed would last for many years, and formed very clean and comfortable dwellings.[6]

Food.

The food of the natives varied with the nature of the islands which they inhabited. On the low coral islands, which make up the greater part of Micronesia, the means of subsistence are very limited; in the Caroline Islands they consist mainly of coco-nuts and a little taro, which is laboriously cultivated on the coralline soil; bread-fruit and bananas are comparatively rare and on some of the islands they are totally lacking; but fish and other marine creatures

[1] Andrew Cheyne, *A Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean* (London, 1852), pp. 120 *sq.* Compare H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 84.

[2] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 115.

[3] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 143.

[4] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 60.

[5] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 68. But see below, pp. 274 *sqq.*

[6] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* pp. 111 *sq.*; Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 69.

everywhere furnish the natives with a plentiful supply of animal food to eke out their vegetable diet. In eastern Micronesia the staple food is the fruit of the pandanus or screw-pine, and coco-nuts are only a secondary source of nourishment.[1] Apart from fish, the animal food of the Micronesians was formerly limited very narrowly by the extreme scantiness of the land fauna, especially in the eastern islands, where rats and a species of *Pteropus* are the only indigenous terrestrial mammals.[2] In some groups of the Marshall Islands rats were eaten, but only by women.[3] On the lofty islands of basaltic formation the means of subsistence were more plentiful and varied. The bread-fruit tree flourishes on them and supplies the inhabitants with their staple food. Bananas, yams, and taro thrive luxuriantly, and much sugar-cane is cultivated. Hence life on these islands is much easier and more comfortable than on the atolls.[4]

§ 2. *Arts and Crafts*

In the arts of life the Micronesians were in some respects superior to their Polynesian cousins. This comes out particularly in the art of navigation; for while the Polynesians on their voyages were usually guided by the winds and paid little attention to the heavenly bodies, the Micronesians, on the other hand, sailed altogether by the stars, with which they were well acquainted. They divided the horizon into twenty-eight points, instead of the thirty-two of our compasses, and they gave to each of the twenty-eight points its name. The canoes of the Caroline Islanders are made to sail with either end foremost, resembling in that respect the Fijian canoes, which the Tonga Islanders copied or borrowed. Whether this model originated with the black Melanesian or the fairer Micronesian race is uncertain, but its universal use among the Micronesians seems to favour the view that it was invented by them. The inhabitants of

Navigation.

Canoes.

[1] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 77. As to the importance of the drupes or fruit of the pandanus tree as an article of diet in the coral islands, see L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* pp. 304 *sq.*, 412 *sq.*; as to the cultivation of taro, see *id.* p. 413.

[2] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, xvi. 257.

[3] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 77.

[4] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. pp. 77 *sq.*

the high islands possess also the art of coating the outside of their canoes with a shining varnish. Besides, by burning the coral rock they made a fine lime, which was mixed with coco-nut oil and used to whitewash the inside of their canoes and render them water-tight. Neither of these arts was known to the Polynesians.[1] Further, the Micronesians practised the art of weaving; by the use of a simple hand-loom they wove the fibrous filaments of the banana plant into cinctures or sashes which have attracted the attention and excited the admiration of foreigners by the elegance of their texture and the beauty and regularity of the inwoven colours.[2] The loom is said to resemble closely one that may be seen in some villages in the interior of Japan.[3]

Weaving.

Like the Polynesians, the natives of Micronesia were totally ignorant of metals until they acquired them from Europeans. Their tools were made of stone, bone, and fish-bones; sharp shells served them as saws and knives.[4] Their spears and swords were armed with the jagged teeth of sharks and proved formidable weapons, inflicting fearful wounds. The spears were sometimes as much as twenty-four feet long. Spears thus armed with sharks' teeth have been called the national weapon of the Micronesian, being found throughout the archipelago.[5] Some of their spears were barbed with the jagged spines or tail-bones of the sting-ray; these were thrown by hand and the barbs were loosely fastened to the shaft, in order that they might break off from the spear and stick in the wound. Three, six, or more of these formidable barbs were sometimes attached to a single spear. The use of such weapons is reported from the Pelew, Caroline, and Gilbert Islands.[6] But it was by no means confined to

Ignorance of metals.

Spears barbed with sharks' teeth and spines of sting-ray.

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 74 *sq.*

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 75.

[3] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 128.

[4] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. pp. 88 *sq.*

[5] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 79; Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, v. 47, 93; C. M. Woodford, "The Gilbert Islands," *The Geographical Magazine*, vi. (1895) p. 344; J. G. Wood, *The Natural History of Man, Australia, New Zealand*, etc. (London, 1880), pp. 378 *sqq.*; F. H. von Kittlitz, *Denkwürdigkeiten*, ii. 117; Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. pp. 130 *sq.*

[6] G. Keate, *Account of the Pelew Islands*, p. 315; J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels* (Leyden, 1895),

Micronesia; it appears to have been widely diffused in Polynesia also, if we may judge from the frequency with which spears barbed with bones of the sting-ray are mentioned by our authorities.[1] A wound inflicted by one of these weapons, when the barb broke off and rankled in the flesh, is said to have been almost certain death, accompanied by the most excruciating torture.[2] It is not uninteresting to note that weapons thus armed appear to have been known to the ancient Greeks, for Ulysses is said to have perished of a wound inflicted on him by his own son Telegonus by means of a spear which was barbed with the spine of a sting-ray.[3] Bows and arrows are reported to have been in use in the Pelew Islands and at Ponape in the Carolines; but it is said that, like the Polynesians, the Micronesians employed these weapons only as playthings and never in war.[4] In the Pelew Islands, indeed, bows and arrows served only to shoot pigeons, but in Ponape and Namoluk of the Carolines they are said to have been used by the natives in war.[5]

Bows and arrows.

The Pelew Islanders have practised the art of making unglazed pottery from time immemorial. As happens with many savage tribes, the craft was in the hands of women exclusively, who fashioned the pots by hand without the use of a wheel. In modern times the native pottery has been to some extent displaced by iron ware imported from the Philippines.[6] Unglazed pottery was also made in the

Pottery.

p. 155; *id.*, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *Mittheilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in Hamburg, 1878–1879*, p. 50 (separate reprint); K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 85; M. Girschner, "Die Karoliner-insel Namoluk und ihre Bewohner," *Baessler-Archiv*, ii. (1912) pp. 169, 170, 171; A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 120; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 61 *sq.*; C. M. Woodford, "The Gilbert Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, vi. (1895) pp. 344 *sq.*; G. M. Murdoch, "Gilbert Islands Weapons and Armour," *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, No. 127, September 1923, p. 175.

[1] Captain James Cook, *Voyages* (London, 1809), i. 215; G. Forster, *Voyage round the World*, ii. 125; W. Mariner, *Tonga Islands*, i. 278, 322; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* ii. 151; Tyerman and Bennet, *Journal of Voyages and Travels*, i. 91 *sq.*; W. Ellis, *Polynesian Researches*, i. 287; G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 171; J. B. Stair, *Old Samoa*, p. 111; T. H. Hood, *Notes of a Cruise in H.M.S. "Fawn"* (Edinburgh, 1863), p. 77.

[2] Tyerman and Bennet, *l.c.*

[3] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, *Epitome*, vii. 36. See the note on the passage in my edition of Apollodorus. Scholars have somewhat absurdly identified the fish with the roach.

[4] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 131.

[5] See below, pp. 106, 143, 210.

[6] J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels*, pp. 197-200.

Marianne Islands and in Yap, one of the most westerly of the Carolines; elsewhere in Micronesia, as in Polynesia, the art of pottery seems to have been unknown.[1]

Currency.

To the Pelew Islanders and the natives of Yap belongs also the credit of having developed a currency or species of money to a higher degree than any other of the Micronesian people. Of the various articles which serve as mediums of exchange in these islands the most valuable or, at all events, the most celebrated, consist of thick stone discs or wheels called *fei*, which vary in diameter from six inches or less to twelve feet, and are pierced in the centre with a hole wherein a pole may be inserted large and strong enough to support the weight and facilitate transportation. The largest of these discs resemble enormous millstones and weigh several tons. As may be easily imagined, such coins are an exceedingly unwieldy and inconvenient sort of money. A man who had extensive business debts to meet would need a whole fleet of canoes or some ten yoke of buffaloes and a waggon to convey the cash to his creditor's house. It might perhaps be thought that, with a currency consisting of stones, it was open to any man to mint his own money on his own premises, and that he who had a quarry at his door possessed in it an inexhaustible source of riches. But that was not so. It was not every stone that could be turned into money by giving it the shape of a disc and boring a hole through the middle. Good stone money can only be made of a particular variety and quality of limestone, known as aragonite, which is not found in Yap and has to be imported from the Pelew Islands. The stones which now serve as money in Yap were originally quarried and shaped by natives of Yap in Babelthuap, one of the Pelew Islands distant some hundreds of miles away to the south, from which they were transported to Yap in canoes or rafts. The largest of them have been imported in recent years in European vessels. In consequence of the steady supply and increased ease of transportation the value of the stone money has gradually declined. Of course, the larger the stone the greater its worth, but it

Stone money.

[1] Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 89. As to pottery in Yap, see W. Müller, *Yap* (Hamburg, 1917–1918), pp. 123-125. In Yap the craft is exclusively in the hands of women of the servile class. The pots are fashioned by hand without the use of a wheel and are very rude products.

is not size alone that is prized ; the limestone, to be of the highest value, must be fine, white, and close-grained. When a man's wealth outgrows the capacity of his house to hold it, he stores it outside, where, exposed to the weather, its colour changes to a dirty grey and the surface is overgrown with moss and lichens. But these superficial defects do not impair the substantial value of the coin. In front of the large club-houses of the men many of these huge round stones are always displayed as evidence of the industry and wealth of the inmates. Scores of them may, or might formerly, be seen in front of the king's treasury at Yap.[1] The existence of this curious kind of money appears, from its mere cumbersomeness, to have given rise to a sort of system of credit. For we are told that it is not necessary for its owner to have it in his actual possession. After concluding a bargain which involves the value of a stone too heavy to be conveniently moved, its new owner may be quite content to accept the bare acknowledgment of ownership without so much as a mark to indicate the exchange, and may leave the money undisturbed at the former owner's house. Such a system of credit speaks highly for the honesty of the people of Yap.[2]

Pearl shells as money.

For small change the natives use flat pearl shells, which are also obtained from the Pelew Islands. The smaller shells, about five inches in diameter, are always strung on plaited cords at intervals of about five inches, with a cowrie in the middle of each interval ; seven shells, thus strung, constitute a unit of value known as a *botha-ayar*. The value of the shells is always computed by their width ; to mutilate the thin edge is to depreciate the coin. Higher in value are the large pearl shells called *yar-nu-betchrek*. Their value is estimated by measuring them on the arm from the finger-tips ; a shell of a hand's length is worth a string of the small shells, and every finger's width beyond that almost

[1] W. H. Furness, *The Island of Stone Money* (Philadelphia and London, 1910), pp. 92 *sqq.* ; F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands* (London, 1899), pp. 236 *sq.*, 259 *sq.* ; Admiral Cyprian Bridge and Mr. Le Hunt in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 132 *sq.* ; J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 3 *sqq.* ; J. Deniker, *The Races of Man*, p. 271 ; W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 129-132. The smallest stone-coins, about an inch and a half in diameter, are threaded on strings, but they are now almost worthless (W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 130).

[2] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 96.

doubles its worth. Four of them are always placed on the corpse of a notable man or woman before it is removed to the grave. These shells are never used as ornaments, although they are often exceedingly beautiful: they are money pure and simple.[1] The natives call them Pelew Island shells (*yar-ni-Balao*), because the old Yap navigators used to make extensive forays on the pearl-beds of their long-suffering neighbours of the Pelew archipelago, and were forced at last to defend their title by many obstinate battles by sea and land.[2]

Fire made by the "stick and groove" method.

Before they became acquainted with Europeans the Micronesians kindled fire in primitive fashion by the friction of wood. In Kusaie or Ualan, one of the Carolines, the method employed was the one known as the "stick and groove." A piece of soft wood, about a foot and a half long, with a groove in it, was laid flat on the ground and held firmly in position by one man, while another man rubbed a pointed stick of hard wood up and down the groove until the shreds of wood thus detached began to smoke and glow, whereupon the sparks were caught in strips of dry bark, which were waved about till they burst into a flame. This apparatus was called *eaga*, from *ea*, "fire."[3] In the Radack group of the Marshall Islands the process was similar, though there the wood is said to have been of the same sort for both pieces of the apparatus.[4] This mode of kindling fire by a stick and groove was the method regularly employed in Polynesia, and it is usually supposed to have been confined to that region of the world; Sir Edward Tylor informs us that he had never found the process distinctly mentioned elsewhere.[5] However, the use of the "stick and groove" method for obtaining fire has since been reported among

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 102-104. As to shell-money in the Pelew Islands and Yap, see also J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 3; W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 127 *sq.*

[2] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 237.

[3] F. H. von Kittlitz, *Denkwürdigkeiten einer Reise nach dem russischen Amerika, nach Mikronesien, und durch Kamtschatka* (Gotha, 1858), ii. 27.

[4] O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea* (London, 1821), iii. 259 *sq.*; A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 323 *sq.*

[5] (Sir) E. B. Tylor, *Researches into the Early History of Mankind*, Third Edition (London, 1873), pp. 237 *sq.*

the Batetela and other African tribes in the basin of the Congo.[1] But the Micronesians are said to have been acquainted with another mode of kindling fire which is far more widely diffused in the world; indeed it is probably the commonest of all primitive methods of procuring fire. The method is usually and appropriately known as the "fire-drill." It consists in placing a board of wood on the ground and holding it fast, while the operator takes a rounded and pointed stick and twirls it between the palms of his hands, keeping it perpendicularly over the board and pressing the point into it. The motion is at first slow, but is accelerated and the pressure increased, till the dust produced by the friction gathers round the borer and begins to smoulder. The dust serves as the tinder to produce the fire. This mode of kindling fire was employed in the Caroline Islands; the women of Yap are said to have been uncommonly expert in its employment.[2]

Fire made by the "fire-drill."

The Jesuit Father Le Gobien, in his history of the Marianne Islands, which was published at Paris in 1700, asserts that when these islands were discovered by Magellan the natives were ignorant of the very existence of fire, and that when they saw it they were exceedingly surprised, taking it for an animal that fed upon the wood, and being burnt they would not go near it, lest it should bite or wound them.[3] This assertion has sometimes been accepted, but the French voyager Louis de Freycinet, who visited and described the islands in the early part of the nineteenth century, rightly observed that the statement is, to say the least, highly improbable, since there are several active volcanoes in the Mariannes, and the islanders, being good navigators, must certainly have seen the flames, as voyagers do to this day. Besides, the natives had words for fire, burning, roasting, and so forth; and before the arrival of

Reported ignorance of fire.

[1] E. Torday, "Culture and Environment," *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, li. (1921) p. 378; E. Torday and T. A. Joyce, *Notes ethnographiques sur des Populations habitant les Bassins du Kasai et du Kwango Oriental* (Brussels, 1922), p. 85; M. G. Bernard, *Notes sur les Badjo* (Brussels, 1914), p. 33.

[2] O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea*, iii. 259; A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt*, ii. 323. As to this mode of making fire, see (Sir) E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.* pp. 238 *sqq.*

[3] Charles le Gobien, *Histoire des Isles Marianes* (Paris, 1700), pp. 44 *sq.*

Europeans they made pottery which bears evident traces of the action of fire.[1]

§ 3. *Megalithic Monuments in the Caroline Islands*

Opinion that the Micronesians are decadent.

Notwithstanding the comparatively high level of barbaric culture to which the Micronesians had attained at the time of their discovery by Europeans, some good observers have been of opinion that their institutions and manner of life afford traces of a still higher grade of civilization which their ancestors had reached in some more favourable situation. This, for example, was the view of the American ethnologist Horatio Hale, who, after instituting a comparison between Micronesian and Polynesian culture, summed up his conclusions as follows: "On the whole, we may venture to say that the semi-civilization of the Polynesians has been attained by bringing to perfection the rude arts and institutions natural to the savage state; while that of the Micronesians has resulted from simplifying and adapting to more restricted circumstances the advantages and usages of civilization."[2] This opinion is cited with approval by L. H. Gulick, one of the best-informed writers on Micronesia.[3] It derives, at least at first sight, support from the remarkable megalithic buildings which exist at two points in the Caroline Islands, and which by their massive structure testify to an energy, a perseverance, and a mechanical skill to which the present inhabitants of the islands can lay no claim. The existence of these imposing ruins, now thickly overgrown with tropical jungle, presents one of the most interesting and difficult problems of the Pacific.

Megalithic buildings.

Megalithic buildings on Ponape.

The most extensive and remarkable of these structures are to be seen in the lagoon a little to the south of Metalanim Harbour, on the eastern coast of Ponape, which is one of the principal islands of the Caroline Archipelago. Here, close under the islet of Tomun, there rise from the shallow waters of the lagoon some fifty or sixty rectangular islets

[1] L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde, exécuté pendant les années 1817, 1818, 1819, et 1820, Historique II.* (Paris, 1829–1839), pp. 165 *sq.* Compare (Sir) E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.* pp. 232 *sq.*

[2] H. Hale, *Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition*, pp. 74-77.

[3] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 416.

mainly of artificial formation. They occupy an area of about ten square miles, but for the most part they are totally deserted. Indeed the natives avoid them, for they say that the place is haunted, and on certain of the islets nothing would induce them to set foot. Two of the islets are encased in walls built of basaltic shafts and prisms; others are solidly faced with the same primitive material. A network of shallow canals intersects this Micronesian Venice, holding for the most part only water enough to float a canoe. The natives call this deserted city Nan-Matal, the Place of the Waterways. It is now enveloped in clumps of mangroves and shrouded in a dense mass of jungle and creepers. A massive breakwater, against which the great rollers dash perpetually in seething foam, runs along the edge of the deep sea, shutting in this picturesque maze of woods and waters and ruins. Out to sea lie two islands, where there are scattered remains of another ancient sea-wall. From one of them you may descry the massive walls of the breakwater stretching away southward for miles, the masonry showing out here and there through the dense tangle of shrubs and mangroves which crown and encircle the islets.

Ruins on islet of Nan-Tauach.

Of the artificial islets which stud the shallow lagoon the most remarkable is called by the natives Nan-Tauach, that is, the Place of Lofty Walls. The buildings on it consist, roughly speaking, of two rectangles, one within the other, enclosed by walls of solid but now ruinous masonry. The water-front of the islet is faced with a terrace of massive stonework, some six or seven feet wide, and standing more than six feet above the surface of the water. Above it rises a great wall of immensely solid Cyclopean masonry from twenty to thirty feet high and about ten feet thick, formed of basaltic prisms laid in alternate courses lengthwise and crossways after the fashion of what masons call headers and stretchers. A wide opening in the wall, facing westward, gives access to the enclosure, forming a portal to the mysterious edifice. One side of the gateway is overshadowed and all but hidden from view by the dense foliage of a huge *Ikoik* (*Ixora*) tree, a wonder of deep green heart-shaped leaves, thickly studded with tassels of red trumpet-like flowers, a cataract of scarlet blossoms. In olden

times the walls must have been considerably higher, but much of the masonry has now fallen into lamentable ruin. A series of huge rude steps brings us into a spacious court-yard, strewn with fragments of fallen pillars. This encompasses a second terraced enclosure of quadrangular shape, topped by a remarkable projecting frieze or cornice of stone-work. The outer enclosure is a hundred and eighty-five feet long by a hundred and fifteen feet wide ; the wall varies in height from twenty to nearly forty feet. The inner enclosure, forming a quadrangle with its sides parallel to those of the outer enclosure, measures eighty-five feet by seventy-five ; its wall is from fifteen to eighteen feet high and about eight feet thick. Another rude flight of steps leads up to the interior of this inner precinct, in the middle of which is an underground chamber or vault about eight feet deep, roofed with six enormous slabs of basalt, and paved with heavy blocks of the same material. Besides this central vault or chamber there are three smaller structures of the same sort on three different sides of the outer court-yard. The one on the east side is very narrow and some twelve feet deep. Standing at the south-west angle of the outer enclosure, where the wall is nearly forty feet high, you look down on a green abyss of nodding woodland, with never a glimpse of the network of canals rippling below. At the north-east angle an enormous banyan-tree, towering full fifty feet above the masonry, has rooted itself into the wall, thrusting its bunches of thread-like fibres into every crevice. As these swell they exercise a constant and gradually increasing pressure which tends to rive the huge blocks from each other. When a high wind blows, the swaying and rocking of the trunk rack the structure in every joint ; and sooner or later, if the verdurous giant is not felled, this side of the wall must collapse in ruin. The whole precinct is thickly carpeted with a luxuriant growth of weeds, grasses, shrubs, and creepers.

Stones of which the edifices are constructed.

The stones of which these remarkable edifices are constructed are natural prisms of basalt, with facets varying in number from five to eight. No mark of cutting or graving tools has been detected on them. Indeed the native axe of Tridacna shell would be far too brittle to chisel into shape

such hard and ponderous blocks. According to native tradition, they were quarried on the north coast of Ponape and conveyed in rafts round the island to the place which they now occupy. The tradition is confirmed by observation, for in the shallower portions of the lagoon may still be seen countless fragments and sometimes whole pillars of basalt lying strewn on the coral bottom, where they may be supposed to have dropped from the rafts. The very spots where the stones were quarried can, it is believed, be identified. They are the dales below the precipices of the district of U and the great perpendicular scarp in the island of Chokach, where the columnar formation of the basalt is very strikingly marked.

Tradition of King Chau-te-Reul.

According to native tradition, the central vault in the islet of Nan-Tauach is the grave of a king who bore the name of Chau-te-Reul or Chau-te-Leur. He was the last of his line and met his death in an invasion of a barbaric horde from the Pali-Air, the barren lands of the south, which may have been some part of New Guinea or of the Melanesian Islands. The invaders arrived in a great fleet of canoes under the command of a fierce and terrible warrior named Icho-Kalakal, and swarming down upon the peaceful inhabitants of the island they blotted out the ancient civilization after a great battle in which many fell on both sides. Part of the walls were thrown down and the defenders either slain in battle or offered up in sacrifice to the war-gods of their conquerors. The king fled, and was drowned in the river which falls into the head of Metalanim Harbour. But the gods or spirits (*ani*) changed him into a blue river fish which the folk of Metalanim refuse to eat to this day. So the conqueror Icho-Kalakal ruled over the land, and when he died he became the war-god of Metalanim.

Excavations on Nan-Tauach.

The preceding account of the megalithic structures of Ponape, and of the legends attaching to them, I have borrowed from the writings of Mr. F. W. Christian, who carefully examined and measured the ruins at the end of the nineteenth century.[1] He excavated the central vault, the

[1] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 115-124; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands* (London, 1899), pp. 76-109. For earlier accounts of the ruins, see H.

traditionary tomb of King Chau-te-Leur in the islet of Nan-Tauach, and discovered in it a great many rose-pink beads, worn down by rubbing from the *Spondylus strombus* and *Conus* shells, varying in diameter from the size of a shilling to that of a threepenny bit, some of them being very minute and delicate in design. Such beads, strung in rows upon a framework of fine cinnet thread and banana fibre, formed the *tor* or chief's belts, which are valued in Ponape as heirlooms to this day. Further, he found thirty or forty large circular shells, bored through the centres so as to be worn as pendants on the breasts; also he discovered some carved shell-bracelets of elegant design, and eighty pearl-shell shanks of fish-hooks exactly resembling those which were used all over Polynesia before the coming of the white man. But his greatest prize were some ancient axes, three of them about a yard long, rubbed down from the central shaft of the *Tridacna gigas* or giant clam. Some of the smaller ones were of fine workmanship, white and strong as polished marble, with keen cutting edges. Others, again, were much corroded through long burial in the earth.[1]

Opinions as to the origin of the ruins.

Who built this strange island city, this Venice of the Pacific? Some have thought that it was constructed by Spanish buccaneers three or four centuries ago, and in confirmation of their opinion they cite a small brass cannon found on the mountains,[2] but this view seems now to be generally and rightly abandoned; certainly it has not been

Hale, *Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition*, pp. 85 *sq.*; Andrew Cheyne, *Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean*, pp. 100 *sq.*; Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. pp. 72-76; C. F. Wood, *A Yachting Cruise in the South Seas* (London, 1875), pp. 163-172; Fr. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen* (Berlin, N.D.), pp. 65-68; F. J. Moss, *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea* (London, 1889), pp. 192-198. Speaking of the islet of Nan-Tauach, this last writer observes (p. 197): "Throughout the ruins the stones used are natural basaltic prisms. In no case are they squared or cut, as old narratives say, and the embankments are of exactly the same structure. . . . The rude character of the whole structure is apparent. Not a vestige of art or workmanship of any kind is to be seen. The most remarkable characteristic is the enormous size of some of the prisms. I measured one at the north-west corner of the wall, about seven feet from the ground. The length was thirteen feet and the breadth two and a half feet, and many others were of greater size and weight."

[1] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 123; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 89 *sqq.* In the former work Mr. Christian gives the number of shell-axes found by him as ten or twelve, in the latter as five.

[2] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 101.

confirmed by Mr. Christian's excavations on the spot, for, as we have seen, he discovered nothing but articles of purely native workmanship. Others have held that the edifices were erected by another race than that which now occupies the islands. For example, Admiral Cyprian Bridge, who had visited the ruins, declared: "It seems incredible, no matter how much you allow for national degradation and forgetting the arts of their ancestors—no matter how much allowance you make, it seems to me incredible that any people of the present race should have constructed these immense works of which we see the remnants. . . . It appears likely, then, that these great ruins were built by a race entirely passed away, which had not only diminished, but had disappeared long before any white man visited the islands."[1] To the same effect Mr. F. W. Christian accepts the conclusion of the able Polish ethnographer J. S. Kubary, who had carefully investigated the ruins and was intimately acquainted with the Caroline Islanders. His conclusion, as reported by Mr. Christian, was that the stone buildings in question were erected by a black race, the predecessors of the present inhabitants of Ponape, who are a mixed people. This view Kubary based in part on four calvaria or skull-tops which he found in graves till then undisturbed among the ruins, for these calvaria clearly showed that the heads were dolichocephalic (with a cephalic index of 70·2), whereas the skulls of the present inhabitants appear to be meso-cephalic (with a cephalic index of 79·7).[2] On the other hand, the hypothesis that the builders were men of another and vanished race has been rejected by such eminent authorities as Horatio Hale[3] and Sir Hercules Read, who see no reason why the present inhabitants of the Caroline

[1] Admiral Cyprian Bridge, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 132.

[2] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 108 *sq.* Elsewhere, however, Mr. Christian seems to incline to believe that the buildings in question were erected by the ancestors of the existing race, and he accepts the parallel drawn by Sir Hercules Read between the Ponapese of to-day and the modern fellaheen of Egypt, whose ancestors built the pyramids. He says: "I think the builders were an intelligent minority swaying an ignorant majority." See F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 135 *sq.* I have not seen Kubary's description of the ruins.

[3] H. Hale, *Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition*, pp. 86 *sq.*

Islands should not be the descendants of the people who built the edifices in question. In confirmation of this view Sir Hercules Read compares the Caroline Islanders of to-day with the modern fellaheen of Egypt, whose ancestors unquestionably built the pyramids, though nobody ignorant of history would imagine, from looking at the fellaheen, that their forefathers were capable of executing such enormous works.[1]

Native account as to the origin of the ruins.

Apparently the only account which the natives can give of these megalithic structures is that they were the work of the spirits (*hani* or *ana*).[2] The tradition, as reported to Mr. Christian by an aged chief, runs thus. Two brothers, who were god-men (*Ani-Aramach*) or heroes and bore the names of Olo-chipa and Olo-chopa, came from the direction of Chokach, which is the north-western district of Ponape, and built the mysterious island city and the breakwater which protects it from the open sea. By their magic spells the great stones, like those of the walls of Thebes at the music of Amphion's lyre,[3] flew through the air like birds and settled down into their appointed places. The names of the two divine brothers, whom tradition represents as the founders of the city, are aptly compared by Mr. Christian to Oro-tetefa and Uru-tetefa, the names of the two divine brothers who are said to have founded, or at all events to have been the first members of, the famous Polynesian society of the Areois.[4] Elsewhere, on account of the resemblance and assonance of the names of the divine Polynesian brothers, I have conjectured that they were twins,[5] and on similar grounds we may perhaps suppose that the divine Micronesian brothers Olo-chipa and Olo-chopa were twins also. If that were so, we should have to add the Venice of the Pacific to the list of towns which legend affirms to have been founded or fortified by twins, and of which the most famous instances are the Boeotian Thebes, fortified by Amphion and Zethus, and Rome, founded and fortified by Romulus and Remus.

The other place in the Caroline Islands where megalithic

[1] (Sir) Hercules Read, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 135.

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 85 *sq.*

[3] Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*, iii. 5. 5.

[4] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 81 *sq.*

[5] *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 267 *sqq.*

buildings of doubtful or unknown origin may be seen is the islet of Lela, Lele, or Leilei, situated off the eastern coast of Kusaie or Ualan, otherwise known as Strong's Island, the most easterly of the Carolines. Like Ponape, this island is lofty and mountainous; if these islands had been flat and of coral formation, the existence of megalithic monuments upon them would have been even more puzzling. On the islet of Lele are several walled enclosures, measuring about two hundred feet long by one hundred feet wide. The walls, built of basaltic blocks, occasionally filled in with coral, are very massive; they rise to a height of eight to twenty and even thirty feet, and in some places are twelve and fifteen feet thick. Some of the stones are very large irregular blocks, while others are beautiful pentagonal prisms. There is not the least trace of a stonecutter's adze on any of them. The principal enclosure is divided by a ruined wall into two courtyards, which are overgrown with coco-nut palms, banyans, jack fruit, and a tangle of creepers and underwood, among which the red spikes of the *Ixora* stand out conspicuous. The walls also are mantled by a wild growth of hibiscus, shrubs, ferns, and creepers. The natives call the ruins Pot-Falat, that is, Lofty Walls. Imposing as are these mouldering edifices, they are far rougher and ruder in design and execution than those on the eastern coast of Ponape; for while many of the stones are enormous, they are clumsily put together. The natives do not appear to ascribe any special sanctity to them nor to regard them with awe. Hence they do not avoid the place as haunted. On the contrary, the little island on which the ruins are to be seen is thickly inhabited; indeed, viewed from a distance, it presents the appearance of a considerable town, its high elegant houses nestling under a grove of palm-trees with finely wooded hills rising behind them. All the houses are surrounded by garden walls built of blocks of basalt, and narrow muddy lanes lead between the walls, which cover as with a labyrinth the greater part of the island. In this picturesque town the King of Kusaie has his residence. Near it and along the beach are remains of immensely solid walls, probably the ruins of an ancient fortification. Along the south-western shore of the little

Other megalithic ruins on Lele, an islet off Kusaie.

island are a number of canals, communicating with the adjoining harbour, in which the sea ebbs and flows. The sides of the canals have crumbled down in some places, but bear evident tokens of having been artificially built. These canals intersect each other, forming islets, on one at least of which stands a towering enclosure of masonry. In many places mangrove trees have choked the waterways, and with other kinds of trees on the islets have nearly buried the whole in a shade congenial to the mystery which enshrouds the ruins.[1]

Native opinion as to the origin of the ruins.

With regard to the origin of the Cyclopean structures on the islet Mr. Gulick was told by the King of Kusaie that "these walls were built by the former inhabitants. Many of the larger rocks were brought from the main island on rafts. When we asked how such heavy blocks could be elevated so high, he replied they were rolled up from one level to another on inclined planes of logs and stones. As to their uses, he said the wall about the hill was for defence from aggressors from the main island, and that many of the remaining walls were in honour of the dead. Nothing could be more probable and satisfactory; nor could anything be more improbable or unsatisfactory than to import a company of buccaneers, or any civilized people, to build what could not be at all to their purpose, nor to the credit of their architectural talents, and what it would have been morally impossible for them to have done. The inhabitants of Kusaie are even now skilled in wall-building. We were told that one of their most decisive evidences of public grief is to rebuild the wall about the premises of a bereaved chief; and to this day chiefs are buried on the

[1] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1862*, pp. 242 *sq.*; C. F. Wood, *A Yachting Cruise in the South Pacific* (London, 1875), pp. 178 *sq.*; Franz Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, pp. 45-47 (with the plate); F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 126-128; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 169-174. As to the aspect of the town on the islet, see F. H. von Kittlitz, *Denkwürdigkeiten einer Reise nach dem russischen Amerika, nach Mikronesien, und durch Kamtschatka* (Gotha, 1858), ii. 44 *sqq.* The latest and by far the fullest description of the ruins, illustrated by plans and photographs, is by P. Hambruch. See E. Sarfert, *Kusae* (Hamburg, 1919), pp. 261-266 (*Ergebnisse der Südsee Expedition, 1908–1910*, herausgegeben von G. Thilenius, ii. *Ethnographie*, B. *Mikronesien*, Band 4, i. Halbband). The name of the islet on which the ruins exist is spelt very variously by our authorities. Dr. Hambruch spells it Lölö.

ancient enclosures, as though they were the mausoleums of the great. Possibly they may in the first instance have been built about royal residences, and on the decease of the builders have become their magnificent sepulchres, though the analogy of present Micronesian customs decides against it."[1]

European opinions as to the origin of the ruins.

The opinions of civilized enquirers as to the origin of the Cyclopean structures of Kusaie are as divergent as those concerning the similar edifices in Ponape, though all seem to agree that the two sets of monuments were probably erected by the same or a kindred people. Horatio Hale would refer both to the ancestors of the existing inhabitants;[2] Admiral Cyprian Bridge preferred to attribute them to a more gifted but now vanished race;[3] and Mr. F. W. Christian sees in them "the product of large numbers of native workmen toiling under the orders of an intelligent minority of a superior race who had a practical knowledge of engineering"; and he adds that the natives have a dim tradition of foreigners coming in strange vessels out of the north, settling on Lele and putting the chiefs of Ualan (Kusaie), the main island across the bay, to tribute.[4] According to Mr. Christian the blocks and prisms of basalt of which the mysterious ruins are built were brought from South Harbour in Kusaie, where nature, as in Ponape, has provided pillars shaped ready in regular prismatic form for the builder's hand.[5]

Micronesian problems.

This is only one of a number of interesting problems which await solution in Micronesia, for on the whole this great archipelago has been more neglected and is less known in Europe than any other in the Pacific.[6] At a meeting of the Pan-Pacific Scientific Congress held at Melbourne in August 1923 to promote scientific research in the Pacific, it was resolved, in the Section of Anthropology and Ethnology, that "for historical reasons the area that first needs study is Micronesia, since the culture and ruins

[1] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 243.

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 86 *sq.*

[3] *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 132.

[4] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 174.

[5] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 171.

[6] Compare Waitz-Gerland, *Anthropologie*, v. 2. p. 45.

of this group are of such a nature that, adequately dealt with, they should furnish the clue to much that is obscure in Oceanic mythology, folk-lore, and culture generally." [1]

The islands to be dealt with in geographical order.

In the following chapters I propose to deal with the various groups of the Micronesian Islands separately and in geographical order. While our attention will be given chiefly to the religion of the natives, and particularly to their belief in the survival of the soul after death and their worship of the dead, we must not wholly neglect the material, social, and intellectual activities of the people, nor yet their physical surroundings; since all these things are intimately bound up with their religion and cannot be abstracted from it without risk of serious error. We shall begin with considering the inhabitants of the Gilbert Islands, who are geographically, and perhaps ethnically, of all the Micronesians the nearest to their kinsfolk, the Polynesians.

[1] *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, No. 127 (September 1923), p. 182.

CHAPTER II

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AMONG THE GILBERT ISLANDERS

§ 1. *The Gilbert or Kingsmill Islands*

The Gilbert Islands.

THE Gilbert or Kingsmill Archipelago comprises some eighteen small islands, about half of which lie to the south and the other half to the north of the equator. Among the principal islands are Arorai, Tamana, Onoatoa, Nukunau, Peru, Taputeuea or Drummond Island, and Nonuti, to the south of the equator, and Aranuka, Kuria, Apamama, Maiana, Tarawa, Apaiang, Taritari, and Makin to the north of the equator. All of them are of coral formation and very low; the highest land in the whole archipelago is only twenty feet above the level of the sea. Most of them possess lagoons enclosed by coral reefs. Such as it is, the most elevated part of the land is regularly on the eastern or windward side of the island, forming a long narrow strip about twelve feet above sea level and from two hundred yards to half a mile in width. The lagoon in all but one of the islands is on the western or leeward side. Naturalists attribute this formation to the action of the prevailing winds and currents, which for eight or nine months of the year set from the east, so that the broken coral, detached by the waves, is heaped up on the eastern or windward side of the islands. The soil, consisting of coral sand and vegetable mould, is only a few inches in depth, yet it supports a dense growth of coco-nut palms and other vegetation, which present a beautiful appearance to the voyager approaching the islands from the sea. Landing in the lagoon he may

walk under the shade of the palms across the narrow strip of higher ground to the windward side of the island, where the surf breaks eternally. It is a fine sight to mark the great rollers dashing one after another on the reef, the long blue swell of crystalline clear water rushing on, its top flecked with patches of white which blow away in spray, then curling over and dissolving in masses of seething, churning foam, grinding and tearing the coral fragments in its fury. So deep is the water right up to the reef that there is nothing to abate the force of the great waves, which may have originated a thousand miles away, till they actually break at your feet.[1]

Native agriculture and arboriculture.

Besides the coral rock small pieces of pumice are found on the islands, and the natives make great use of them as manure, for they are diligent cultivators of their niggard soil and of the trees, particularly the coco-nut palm and the screw-pine or pandanus, which together furnish them with their chief articles of food. They fence round the coco-nut trees and mix pounded pumice with the soil at their roots. The stone is collected by the women in small baskets on the beach, where it is washed up by westerly winds. They plant taro in beds, one of which in the island of Makin is reported to be no less than seven miles long. They weed the beds carefully and loosen the roots to promote the growth. Soil is brought to the taro-beds in baskets, it may be from a distance of miles, and it is often sifted to separate the worthless particles of stone. From the fruit of the screw-pine or pandanus they extract a nourishing and not unpalatable food, while from its leaves they plait the beautiful mats for which these islands are noted, and which in former days constituted the only clothing of the people. Orchards of bread-fruit trees are found in the northern but apparently not in the southern islands. The reefs and shoals swarm with many varieties of fish, lobster, turtle,

[1] H. Hale, *Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition*, pp. 90 *sqq.*; Ch. Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition*, v. 79 *sqq.*; C. M. Woodford, "The Gilbert Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, vi. (1895) pp. 325 *sqq.* For general descriptions of the islands and their inhabitants, see also L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1862*, pp. 408-414; C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans* (Leipzig, 1875–1876), ii. 316 *sqq.*

shell-fish, and sea-slugs, from which the inhabitants draw a great part of their sustenance.[1]

§ 2. *The Gilbert Islanders: their Character and Mode of Life*

Appearance of the islanders.

The natives of the Gilbert Islands as a whole differ in their personal traits from those of the Polynesians, and more nearly resemble the Malays. Their colour is a dark copper, a shade or two deeper than the Tahitian; they are of the middle size, well made, and slender. Their hair is fine, black, and glossy, with a slight tendency to curl. Their features are small, but high and well marked. The nose is straight or slightly aquiline, but always widened at the nostrils; the mouth is somewhat large, with full lips and small teeth; the cheek bones project forward, so as to give the eyes the appearance of being sunken; the eyes are large, bright, and black. They have moustaches and beards, very black and fine, like their hair, but rather scanty. The average height of the men is about five feet eight inches, and the great majority would be called small. Obesity is conspicuously absent, and there are none of those burly figures which are so common in the Society Islands and Hawaii. The women are much smaller in proportion than the men, with slight figures and delicate features.[2]

The natives of Makin.

But this description does not apply to the natives of Makin, the most northerly island of the group, who differ so much in appearance from the others that were it not for the similarity of their manners, customs, and language they might be regarded as a different people. Their colour is a shade lighter than that of the natives of the other islands; their stature is taller, and their whole frame much larger; their limbs are full and well rounded; their bodies as smooth as a child's; their features oval, and more regular and delicate than those of the islanders to the south. Coming from the southern islands to Makin the American explorers under Commodore Wilkes were astonished at the contrast

[1] Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 81; H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 92; L. H. Gulick, *op. cit.* pp. 412 *sq.*; C. M. Woodford, *op. cit.* p. 329; C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 335 *sq.*; R. Parkinson, "Beiträge zur Ethnologie der Gilbertinsulaner," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889) pp. 90 *sq.*

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 93 *sq.*

between the natives who met them and the natives whom they had left behind. They say: "Having understood that they were of the same race with the other islanders, we were quite unprepared for the extraordinary sight that was now presented. Instead of the slender forms, sharp features, and stern countenances of the Drummond Islanders, we saw a crowd of stout, hearty figures, and round, jolly faces, which, though different in features, recalled to our minds the bulky chieftains of Tahiti. They were also lighter in complexion than the southern tribes, and more tattooed. One of the first who came on board was a perfect mass of fat. Though of good height, he appeared really short, from his immense girth. As he walked, the flesh of his cheeks and breasts shook like a jelly. His limbs were of enormous size, but smooth as those of a child. His face was round, with neatly cut whiskers and mustachios, and his fine hair in black glossy ringlets fell down on his shoulders. When he smiled, every feature was dilated with joy, and an even row of small white teeth was displayed which a lady might have envied."[1]

Character of the natives of Makin and of the other Gilbert Islanders.

This difference in looks is accompanied by as great a difference in character. Both peoples, indeed, are highly ingenious, as is shown by the construction of their houses and canoes, the manufacture of their dresses and of their peculiar armour, and by the numerous comforts and conveniences with which, under very unfavourable circumstances, they have contrived to surround themselves. But whereas the natives of the southern islands are suspicious and irritable, with a certain wildness and even ferocity in their manners, the people of Makin, on the contrary, are a remarkably soft and gentle race, of a mild and kindly disposition, not without a tinge of effeminacy. Of their humanity a high idea is given by the testimony of Grey, an English sailor, who lived five years among them and affirmed that in all that time only one man was put to death.[2] On the other hand, the natives of all the other Gilbert Islands exhibit a strong propensity to warlike pursuits; indeed in the old days war is said to have been part of their business and to have engaged most of their attention.[3] One writer even goes

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 94; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 82 *sq.*

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 95.

[3] Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 55, 91.

so far as to say that among no people on the face of the earth was war so much a matter of ordinary routine as among the Gilbert Islanders; the smallest occasion sufficed to summon the inhabitants of a village to arms. Women were the commonest cause of fighting, but the most trivial pretexts were enough to set these martial islanders by the ears.[1] In 1884, before the islands were annexed by Great Britain, the adult male population of the southern end of Taputeuea, one of the largest islands, had almost succeeded in exterminating themselves by fighting.[2] Yet some half a century earlier, when the islands were visited and examined by the United States Exploring Expedition under Commodore Wilkes, the island was thickly inhabited, appearing like a continuous village from one end to the other; the officers of the expedition, after careful and repeated observation, estimated the population at from ten to fifteen thousand. They believed all the islands to be no less densely peopled, and reckoned the population of the whole archipelago at eighty-five thousand.[3] Some twenty years later another and perhaps more accurate estimate reduced the number of the inhabitants to fifty or fifty-four thousand, but even then it was thought that by far the greater portion of the whole population of Micronesia was congregated on this single group.[4] Later in the century the numbers of the natives had seriously diminished, the decrease being attributed in part to that fatal intercourse with white people which appears to act like a plague on the islanders of the Pacific.[5]

Former populousness of the islands.

In their wars the Gilbert Islanders made use of a peculiar sort of armour to protect the body against the formidable edges of their spears, which were barbed with sharks' teeth. The armour consisted of a jacket and trousers of a very thick, close network, braided of coco-nut fibre, together with a cuirass made likewise of this cord, but woven so compactly, and in so many thicknesses, that it formed a solid board, half an inch thick, which would form a tolerable defence even against the stroke of a sword. Its

Native armour.

[1] R. Parkinson, "Beiträge zur Ethnologie der Gilbertinsulaner," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889) p. 45.

[2] C. M. Woodford, *op. cit.* p. 343.

[3] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 92 *sq.*

[4] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1862*, p. 410.

[5] C. M. Woodford, *op. cit.* p. 343.

shape was nearly that of an ancient cuirass, except that a square piece rose up behind to guard the head from a side blow. They had also caps or helmets, ingeniously made of the skin of the porcupine fish, cut off at the head and then extended to the proper size. It became stiff and hard in drying, and the spines protruding on every side helped to ward off the blows of the dreaded weapons.[1]

Houses.

The houses and canoes of the Gilbert Islanders are among the best built in the Pacific; all their structures are large, strong, and durable, and though the materials are often most unsuitable they are put together with so much taste as to combine elegance with strength. Their dwelling-houses have two stories, a ground floor and a loft or garret, separated by a horizontal partition of slender sticks laid upon joists. In the loft are stored the food, mats, and other valuables of the occupant. This mode of building is said to have been adopted in order to avoid the rats, which swarm in the islands. In Tarawa the houses are larger; some of them have two upper stories.[2] The council-houses (*mariapas*) are huge structures, many of them over a hundred feet long, nearly fifty feet wide, and thirty to forty feet high at the ridge-pole. They are nothing more than immense roofs, reaching to within three feet of the ground, their eaves resting on large coral slabs. Here the people congregate on every public occasion; here they discuss every public measure; and here they dance and revel for days and nights together.[3] In consequence of the importance of their houses and canoes the trade of a carpenter is held in great repute; those who exercise it are either dependents of the chiefs and work by their orders, or are free born; the latter are paid for their services, the payment being proportioned to the time occupied in the work. The time required for building a house is about two months. A canoe capable of carrying ten persons takes five or six months to build. The whole population of a town joins in the labour of constructing a council-house. While the men build houses and canoes,

Council-houses.

Women's work.

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 103; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 47 *sq.*; C. M. Woodford, *op. cit.* pp. 344 *sq.*

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 102 *sq.*; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 53, 70.

[3] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 413. Compare H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 103; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 52, with the plate; R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* ii. 97 *sq.*

the women fabricate the articles of dress, sails, mats for flooring, and the mats worn by the men. The mats are made of the leaves of the pandanus, cut into narrow strips, and woven by hand. The leaves, according to their age, are light yellow or dark brown; the brown and yellow strips are braided together so as to form regular patterns, square or diamond-shaped, which have a pretty effect.[1] Mats.

As to the social state of the natives in former days the American explorers under Commodore Wilkes, in 1841, were able to obtain definite information only with regard to the islands of Apamama and Makin. On the former they found a system of civil polity like that which prevailed in Polynesia. Society was divided into three ranks, the chiefs or nobles (*ōamata*), landholders (*katoka*), and common people or serfs (*kawa*). The nobles were the free and well-born natives, who possessed the greater part of the land and all the political authority. The landholders were persons not originally of noble birth, who had acquired land and with it freedom by the favour of their chiefs or the fortune of war; but they had no voice in the public assembly in which all matters of general import were determined. These assemblies were held in the large council-houses. There every noble family had its seat along the side of the house; the middle was open to the landholders and commoners or serfs, none of whom had any voice in the proceedings. In some of the islands certain chiefs contrived through victory in war to obtain a superiority over their fellow nobles and so to establish monarchical government. For example, in Apamama a certain chief succeeded by conquest in making himself king of the whole island, and in the time of the American expedition his grandson had conquered the neighbouring islands of Kuria and Nanouki. It was to this little kingdom of three islands that most of the information obtained by the Americans applied; but from their observations they inferred that the manners and customs of the natives on the other islands, with the exception of Makin, were similar. In Makin also a king reigned at the time of the American expedition, but there too monarchy appears to have been a comparatively recent institution,

Three social ranks.

Monarchy.

[1] Ch. Wilkes *op. cit.* v. 94 *sq.*

having been established only through a series of bloody wars by the grandfather of the reigning monarch. The conquered chiefs, who had before shared the supreme power with him, yielded to the force of arms; they and their descendants made no attempt to regain their independence, and for a century the island had enjoyed uninterrupted peace and quiet. The government was carried on after the simplest patriarchal fashion, the king contenting himself with receiving the tribute due to him, without meddling with the affairs of the separate towns over which he ruled. But according to the English seaman Grey, there was in Makin, besides the king, a chief judge or prime minister, in whose hands the conduct of government really rested.[1]

Sexual morality.

With regard to the morality of the sexes Commodore Wilkes declared that "among this people chastity is not regarded as a virtue, nor considered as any recommendation in the selection of a wife; but after marriage, a woman must be extremely guarded in her conduct, as the punishment for a want of duty in this respect is severe, even amounting to death in some cases; but it is usually limited to expulsion from her husband's house. Notwithstanding these penalties, there are frequent infractions of these ties, and it is not surprising that they should occur, under their system of polygamy, and the interdiction which prevents the younger brothers of chiefs, and persons who do not hold land, from marrying. Intrigues and elopements are not unfrequent, and produce the same results as elsewhere."[2] In this account the American enquirer appears to have done great injustice to the standard of morality among the unmarried portion of the Gilbert Islanders: he may perhaps have been misled by the conduct of some unscrupulous men and loose women with whom his sailors came into contact. From the enquiries of Mr. Arthur Grimble, who, at a much later date, it is true, has lived among the people, learned their language, and pieced together their fragmentary accounts of bygone times from the lips of old people, we learn that the natives set the highest value on the chastity of unmarried girls. The violation of maidenhood, he tells us, was everywhere

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 100-102; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 83-85.

[2] Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 91.

looked upon as one of the most awful offences and was punished with great severity. On the island of Tamana, if a guilty couple was detected in the commission of the crime, the man was tied to a log and set floating away on the open sea, while the girl was taken to the family meeting-house (*maneaba*), to receive condign punishment at the hands of her kinsfolk. There they stripped her naked, stretched her spread-eagle fashion on the ground, with her hands and feet lashed to stakes, and then throttled her by pressing a heavy beam of wood across her throat. Every one of her lineal kin alive, and every brother and sister down to the latest born infant, must have a hand on the beam when the sentence was executed. The body of the culprit was thrown into the sea. On other islands, however, it seems that only the man was punished, usually by being put to death, if the girl's parents were strong enough to enforce the penalty; if they were not, the offender's own family would force him to make amends by forfeiting a large piece of land. In case he refused to submit to the punishment, they would themselves kill him in order to prevent a blood-feud.[1] The islanders also entertained the strongest objection to the marriage of near kin and punished incest with death. In Tamana and Arorae the offenders were laid face down in a shallow pool of water and there suffocated: in the northern islands of the group they were lashed to a log of wood and set adrift on the ocean. The lightest punishment inflicted seems to have been to put the incestuous couple aboard a small canoe with a few coco-nuts and a paddle, but no sail, and thus abandon them to the elements. The belief was that the sun would hide his face from the spot in which two such sinners were permitted to live unpunished. This notion was connected with a mythical hero, named Bue, whose deeds closely resembled those of the great Polynesian hero Maui. It is said that, after his return from a wondrous voyage into the east, Bue committed incest with his sister under the noonday sky; at the sight their ancestor, the sun, was filled with rage and wrecked the vessel in which they were sailing; only the possession of a magic staff saved

Breaches of chastity severely punished.

Incest punished with death.

[1] A. Grimble, "From Birth to Death in the Gilbert Islands," *Journal of the R. Anthropological Institute*, li. (1921) p. 41.

them from drowning. Ever since that day the sun has laid his curse on incest, and in deference to him all offenders must be punished with the watery death which he would have visited on Bue and his sister.[1]

Polygamy.

In the islands where the system of chieftainship prevailed, only a chief might marry more than one wife, but a commoner was free to keep concubines, and further he had a legal right to cohabit with his wife's uterine sisters and with his deceased brothers' widows; in other words, the Gilbert Islanders practised the customs known as the sororate and the levirate. If a man did not choose to exercise this right over his wife's unmarried sister, he might give her to a friend to wife. But the man who married her acquired in his turn the right of cohabitation with all her uterine sisters; and thus it would come about that two men shared the same rights over the same group of women, the wife of each being the concubitant of the other. Upon this custom was founded a system of exchange of wives, which prevailed commonly in the islands.[2] But apart from such family arrangements wives were most jealously guarded in the olden time. Thus in the island of Peru it was customary to prohibit a married woman, for years after her marriage, from looking at or speaking to any one but her husband. When she went anywhere, she covered herself up with a mat, made for the purpose, which was so folded in Corean style as to leave but a small hole in front for her to see the road before her. Any man who saw her coming along would go out of the way till she had passed. An infraction of the rule would excite her husband's jealousy and provoke his vengeance.[3]

Sororate and levirate.

Wives jealously guarded.

Seclusion of girls at puberty.

Girls at puberty usually passed a year or eighteen months in strict seclusion in a *ko* or bleaching-house, where their skin was whitened as a preparation for marriage. For this purpose a small thatched hut was built at a distance from the family dwelling, generally on the eastern side of the island; from the eaves to the ground a screen of coco-

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 26 *sq.* Dr. George Turner mentions that in the island of Arorae "the penalty for murder, theft, incest and adultery was strangulation, and the body thrown into the sea" (*Samoa*, p. 295).

[2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 29.

[3] G. Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), p. 298. Compare A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 33.

nut leaves was hung all round the hut, and inside of it a small cubicle was rigged up on a light framework, leaving a passage of a few feet between its walls and the screen. The deepest gloom reigned within the cubicle, and there the girl must live, bereft of sunshine and unseen by the people. Only her parents and grandparents were allowed to go near her; her only constant companion was her adoptive grandmother, who attended to all her wants. She might wash and perform her toilet between the outer screen and the cubicle, but as soon as that was done she must retire again into the inner darkness. Thus she lived in utter idleness, for there was not light enough to guide her fingers at work; but in compensation she learned all the spells that her grandmother could teach her.

Their skins bleached in imitation of ancestral gods.

During this time of solitary confinement the girl's skin was carefully attended to. Every day at sunrise her body was rubbed over with the creamy juice of ripe coco-nuts; at mid-day she bathed in sea water; and at sunset the cream was again applied, left to dry, and then washed away. Besides she was constantly massaged from head to foot by her grandmother and anointed with coco-nut oil. After a few months of such treatment, in a seclusion which no sunray ever pierced, her natural dusky tint left her skin, and she became pale with a very becoming pallor. Though the formalities of the bleaching-house have long been abandoned, many women in the islands continue to bleach themselves in private to this day, so that it is still possible to judge of the effect of the treatment. We are told that the object of the process is to assimilate the women to certain ancestral gods, who, like the Polynesian Tangaroa, were fair of skin and marvellously beautiful. These gods lived in Matang, a bourne of departed souls and one of the ancient homes of the people, and although their descendants have become dusky by intermarriage with Melanesian or Negrito tribes, they still attempt by artificial means to hark back to the glorious ancestral type.[1]

Boys transferred to the care of their paternal grandfathers.

At about the age of ten a boy would probably leave his father's house for that of his paternal grandfather or grandfather's brother, to whom he had been promised in adoption.

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 42 *sq.*

Arrangements for this transfer had very likely been made before his birth. To his new guardian he owed the most particular devotion, becoming the procurer of his food, constant companion, and nurse in sickness. From him he learned the arts and crafts of his people, and above all the family traditions, including the genealogies and heroic deeds of his forefathers, the lore of the stars, the worship of the ancestral spirits, and the whole mythology of his race. When his pectoral and axillary hair began to grow strongly, he was subjected to a series of painful ordeals designed to test his courage and endurance; for, from the moment of weaning, a boy was looked on as a future warrior, and all the ceremonies which he underwent were performed with that idea predominant. Among other things his long matted hair, which had been suffered to grow unshorn for many years, was cut by his father with a shark's tooth, while the lad had to gaze without blinking into the flames of a scorching fire; he had to receive on his naked head and shoulders, without flinching, a shower of live sparks which his adoptive grandfather shook over him from a burning coco-nut leaf; he had to drink a disgusting potion compounded of fresh water, salt water, and coco-nut oil in equal parts, stirred up in a coco-nut shell with the barb of a sting-ray; and his scalp was lacerated by his father with a shark's tooth, till the blood streamed over his eyes and cheeks. The time for beginning these ordeals was determined by the observation of the rising of the star Antares at sunset, and they were repeated at intervals of a month for several months in succession. A month after their conclusion, and at the same phase of the moon, the novice was taken to the eastern side of the island, where a small hut, thatched with pandanus leaves, had been built for him among the trees fringing the beach of the ocean. There, accompanied by his adoptive grandfather, he had to live till the thatch of the roof began to rot and leak above his head. In a succession of droughty seasons this might take four or even five years; in normal times, with the usual amount of rain, it could hardly take less than two and a half years. During all this period the strictest watch was kept on him. No woman, not even his mother or grandmother, might approach the place, and he was never allowed to go near the

Ordeals undergone by lads at puberty.

Long seclusion of lads.

western or lagoon side of the island, where the villages were built. Lads were forbidden to converse with him ; the senior members of his family brought him his daily ration. He owed the most implicit obedience to the commands of his grandfather, who set him tasks of strength, hardihood, and endurance to perform, such, for example, as to bring in some heavy stone on his shoulder from among the surf seething on the ocean reef. Nothing in the nature of amusement was permitted him ; he was exhorted to put away all soft and frivolous thoughts, and to brood perpetually over deeds of strength, the day's task, the valour of his forefathers, and all things befitting a worker and a warrior. When at last his grandfather perceived that the thatch came near to leaking, he put the strength of the young man to a series of severe tests. The youth had to hew logs of wood with an adze of tridacna shell in a given time, to lift and bear heavy boulders on his shoulder for certain distances, to tear up saplings by the roots from the ground. If he passed the tests successfully, he received a new lance as a token of manhood and with it the title of Warrior (*Roro-buaka*). Often his marriage followed hard upon his release from his long confinement and seclusion. On the other hand, if he failed to pass the tests, a new hut with new thatch was built for him, and he had to go through the whole course over again from beginning to end.[1]

Relation of wife to her husband's father's brothers.

When a young man married, his wife entered into a special and very peculiar relationship to his father's brothers, a relationship known as *tinaba*. To all these uncles-in-law she owed a particular deference, which, if duly observed, was rewarded by presents of land. She must especially see to it, that at all festivities they were provided with wreaths of flowers, scented oil, and dancing mats ; she must, on demand, give her long tresses to make plaited belts with which to gird the mats about their bodies ; and further she must be prepared from time to time to grant them access to her person. All this was encouraged by her husband, not simply out of respect for his uncles, but on account of the accession of landed estate which he acquired by his wife's compliance. He himself owed similar obligations to the sisters of his wife's mother.[2]

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 37-40.

[2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 32.

Care taken of women in pregnancy.

When a woman was with child, the greatest care was taken to conceal her condition from strangers, lest they should compass her death by evil magic.[1] For the fear and the practice of magic appear to have played a great part in the life of the Gilbert Islanders. We are told that skill in dancing and the art of composing chants, in fishing and canoe building, in the use of dagger, lance, and the throwing-stick, in the craft of the housebuilder, and in endless other useful things, in short, in all accomplishments which were expected of a native, "had their attendant magic, allied to simple forms of ritual, for nothing of importance was done, or thought, or said, or, as it would appear, even dreamed, without a preliminary charm."[2] The fifth month of pregnancy was deemed the most dangerous of all to mother and child; hence when it arrived she was taken to the eastern shore of the island, where she sat in a small clearing made for her in the bush with a girdle of the inner bark of a particular kind of tree bound about her waist as a protection against hostile magic.[3] And after her confinement all the refuse was burnt lest it might fall into the hands of enemy magicians. For three days after the birth the mother and child had to remain in the north end of the house, under the protection of the female spirit Aibong, whose home was on the northern horizon.

Importance of magic.

Bonfire kept up after childbirth.

During these three days a huge bonfire was kept alight close against the eastern side of the house, and the united families of the child's mother and father danced in the open about it. This observance was called "the reddening of the fire," and was thought to encourage the soul (*taamnei*) of the child to take up its abode in its little body.[4] The usage is interesting as illustrative of the native conception of the soul; they seem to have imagined it to be free to take up its abode in the body or to leave it alone.

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 34.

[2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 37.

[3] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 35.

[4] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 36. The custom of maintaining a great fire outside a house for three days after a birth is mentioned also, but without a reason assigned for it, by R. Parkinson, "Beiträge zur Ethnologie der Gilbertinsulaner," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie* ii. (1889), p. 34.

§ 3. *Death and Funeral Rites*

The same conception of the soul as separable from the body comes out very clearly in a custom observed by the Gilbert Islanders after a death. On the three nights following a decease they performed a ceremony called *bo-maki*. All the people, irrespective of their kinship to the departed, gathered together in the darkness at the southern end of the village with sticks of pandanus wood and the butt-ends of coco-nut leaves in their hands. Then, forming a line from east to west, they slowly advanced northward, beating the ground and trees before them with their staves. Not a word was uttered. When the line had swept through the village from south to north, it stopped, and the participants disbanded in silence. All pedestrians who happened to fall in with the party while it was at work would seize a staff and join in, passing on their way when the ceremony was over. The object of the ceremony, we are informed, "was to encourage the soul of the dead to leave the neighbourhood of the body, and also to drive away any evil spirit that might wish to possess it."[1] In fact, the ceremony would seem to have been essentially a ghost-hunt intended to rid the living of the dangerous spirit of the dead.

Ceremony of driving the ghost out of the village.

As soon as life was extinct the family set up a great wailing and yelling, which was kept up by relays for three days without intermission, except when the ceremony of ghost-driving was being performed; for they imagined that to keep up the wailing at these times would have encouraged the soul to linger about the body and to haunt the living.[2] For how could the poor ghost imagine that his friends really wished to get rid of him, when they were giving vent to such loud expressions of sorrow at his decease?

Wailing for the dead.

More evidence of the fear of the ghost and the desire to banish him from the abode of the living is furnished by another mortuary custom observed by the islanders. In the palms of the corpse they laid two small shrivelled coco-nuts, which were supposed to prevent the soul of the dead from returning to haunt the family.[3]

Measure to prevent return of ghost.

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 44.
[2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 44 *sq.*
[3] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 45.

Burial after three or nine days.

The body was kept for three or nine days and buried either on the fourth or the tenth day, as the case might be. Those who kept it for the shorter period were of opinion that, as the soul had finally been banished the neighbourhood by the third performance of the ghost-drive, the body might safely be laid to its last rest on the fourth day. But many families, particularly in the islands of Tarawa and Butaritari, believed that the soul might reinhabit the body at any time during the nine days after death, and hence, though they took the greatest pains to prevent it, they nevertheless kept its tabernacle of flesh ready to lodge the returning spirit to the last moment. For in the tropical climate of these islands decomposition sets in rapidly, and it is not possible, without special precautions, to keep a dead body long in the house.[1]

"Lifter of the Head."

On the third night, after the final performance of the ghost-drive, one of the female relations of the deceased came to utter the final spells, which would, according to the native expression, "straighten the path of the soul to the land of the ghosts." She was called the "Lifter of the Head," because she held the dead person's head in her lap while she crooned her spell. If she did her work well, the people believed that the body appeared to shine like fire in the eyes of the ghost, who turned away in fear and at once set out on his journey to his long home. If the body was kept for nine days, the "Lifter of the Head" performed her office every evening from the third day to the eve of the burial.[2]

Mortuary custom in Makin.

While the practice of keeping the dead body in the house for three or nine days after the death may be regarded as the usual one in the Gilbert Islands, a very different custom prevailed in Makin, the most northerly island of the group, if we can trust the evidence of Robert Wood or Grey, a Scotch sailor who spent five or more years in the island in the first half of the nineteenth century. According to him, when the first ceremonies of wailing were over, the corpse was washed and laid out on a new mat, which was spread on a large oblong plate, made of several tortoise shells sewed together. From two to six persons, according to the size of the corpse, seated themselves opposite one another on the floor of the house, and held the plate, with

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 45 *sq.* [2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 46.

the body of their friend, upon their knees. When they were tired of supporting it, they were relieved by others, and in this way, by a series of relays, the service was kept up for a space of time varying from four months to two years, according to the rank of the deceased. All persons, whether free-born or slaves, received these peculiar honours after death. While the corpse was thus lying in state, a fire was kept up day and night in the house, and its extinction would have been regarded as a most unlucky omen. At the end of the period the remains were sometimes wrapped in mats and deposited in the loft of the house; but more commonly they were buried in a piece of ground set apart for the purpose, and the grave was marked by a stone at the head, another at the foot, and a third laid horizontally across these two. When Wood was asked how the people could afford to spend so much of their time in this preposterous manner, he readily answered, "One half of them have nothing else to do"—a statement which the American explorers, to whom Wood communicated this account, were inclined from their own observation to believe.[1]

Mummification of the dead.

Some confirmation of this otherwise seemingly improbable account is furnished by a statement as to a mode of preserving a body for years which was made to Mr. Grimble by a very old man, a native of Maiana, who remembered to have seen his adoptive grandfather's remains so treated. The process, according to him, was as follows. The corpse was attended to during the first nine days exactly as if it were to be buried on the tenth, except that it was fumigated more thoroughly than usual with burned leaves. Until the twelfth day, growing ever more bloated with the advance of decomposition, it was kept in the partial darkness of the house, which had been screened about with coco-nut leaves for the occasion, and all crawling life that appeared on its surface was removed and burned. On the thirteenth day the abdomen collapsed, and the protruding eyeballs began to return into their sockets. The body was then placed on a platform exposed to the sun and left there

[1] Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 103 *sq.*; H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 100. As to Wood, *alias* Grey, see Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 72; Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 90 *sq.* According to Hale, Grey had spent five years in the island; according to Wilkes he had been left in the island seven years before he was rescued by the Americans.

to dry, the process of desiccation being artificially helped by fumigations and anointings, till nothing remained of it but the skeleton covered and held together by a parched and blackened hide. In this state it was removed to the house and laid on a special shelf reserved for it under the northern gable. There it might be kept for several years. The bereaved relations would often mount upon the shelf to sleep beside the dead; they would anoint the head with oil to the accompaniment of charms for good luck; and they would deck the body out in garlands of flowers on days of feast and dance. On one or two occasions the beloved mummy was taken to the dance, and lay on its back among the assembled people, receiving all the attentions that would be bestowed on an honoured guest. After a few years of such treatment the family seems to have tired of the dead man, so they buried him in the ordinary way, having first cut off and scraped his head and deposited it in a box after the customary fashion,[1] to which we shall presently return.

The grave. The grave was generally dug in the floor of the house, though sometimes it was outside; it was only a foot and a half or two feet deep at the most. Great importance was attached to the position of the body in the grave. In the lagoon islands the feet of the corpse might point either west or south; other orientations were forbidden in the belief that they would prevent the ghost from reaching the land of shades and so would turn it into a lost soul (*taamnei ae bua-nako*). In Banaba or Ocean Island, an isolated island to the west of the main group, the corpse was invariably laid in the grave with its head to the east and its feet to the west. For three days after the burial the family feasted and danced, while at the same time the nearer relations of the deceased cast themselves on the grave and wailed at the top of their voices. These mourners very often composed songs or dirges for the occasion, the most memorable of which were handed down in the family for generations; a few are still extant. A near relation of the deceased would make a bed of the grave and open it from time to time to look on the beloved remains, or to appro-

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 47 *sq.*

priate a bone or two for the manufacture of fish-hooks, thatching tools, and other utensils.[1]

The skulls carefully preserved.

While some of the foregoing customs clearly manifest a fear of the ghost and a desire to hasten, or at least to facilitate, his departure to the spirit land, the Gilbert Islanders observed other customs in regard to the deceased which as plainly reveal an intention of retaining the spirits of the departed in the neighbourhood of their old home and of keeping up a regular communication with them. The two sets of customs appear to us contradictory, but such contradictions do not trouble the savage, who reflects too little on his actions to maintain a strict logical consistency in his conduct.[2] The particular usages which displayed an attachment to the departed and a wish to maintain friendly relations with him or her, were concerned with the treatment of the skull. Very often the skull was removed from the body and, after being carefully cleaned in sea water, was wrapped in a mat of fine mesh and preserved in a box of pandanus wood. The widow or child of the deceased would sleep and eat beside this relic, carry it about in all excursions, and often anoint it with coco-nut oil. When the teeth dropped out, they would be kept, and the canines used for making necklaces, which were worn in dances. After several years the skull was buried again with the skeleton ; or it might be planted in the ground near the dwelling-house in such a manner as to leave the cranium protruding above the earth. Around this a small square enclosure, covered with white shingle, was marked out by a low kerb of trimmed coral. Such a place became a sort of shrine, which it was death for strangers to approach, but to which the relations of the deceased regularly resorted in order to anoint the skull with coco-nut oil and to claim help from the spirit of the departed in their various ventures. Sometimes successive generations of skulls were thus planted side by side at a distance of about two feet apart ; a row of five existed in a village of the island of Tarawa down to about 1898. Sometimes, though rarely, the whole skeleton was

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 46, 47.

[2] This aspect of savage thought is well illustrated by Professor Lévy-Bruhl in his learned work *La Mentalité primitive* (Paris, 1922).

dug up and hung to the ridge-pole of the family meeting-house, from which it was lowered from time to time and anointed for good luck in fishing, war, or love.[1]

The skulls worshipped as family gods.

The practice of detaching the skulls from the bodies, carefully preserving them, and doing them reverence, was remarked by the early voyagers, who rightly discerned in it a form of worship of the dead. Thus Commodore Wilkes tells us that "when the flesh is nearly gone, the skull is taken off, carefully cleaned, oiled, and put away. The skulls of their ancestors are kept by chiefs as a kind of household deity, to which they frequently offer up prayers and entreaties, to have a regard and to keep watchful care over their descendants. The skulls are not unfrequently taken down, bound around with wreaths, anointed with oil, and have food set before them. In passing from one island to another these skulls are always carried along, as if members of the family, and treated with every mark of reverence."[2] In the island of Arorae, says Dr. George Turner, "the dead were kept three days above ground, and even then only partially buried, until the head separated from the body. The skulls were preserved by the family as household gods. In addition to offerings of food to each skull, tobacco smoke was puffed into its mouth."[3]

§ 4. *The Soul and its Fate after Death*

Soul identified with shadow.

Like many other peoples, the Gilbert Islanders appear to have identified the soul with the shadow, for we are told that the words for soul and shadow were the same (*tamune* or *tamre*).[4]

Fate of soul after death.

They believed that the soul survives the death of the body, and that as soon as a person dies his soul or shade ascends into the air and is carried about by the winds, whithersoever they may chance to blow.[5]

Elysium called Kainakaki.

At last it is supposed to arrive at a sort of elysium, called Kainakaki,

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 46 *sq.*

[2] Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 103; compare *id.*, pp. 86, 88; H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 98, 100.

[3] George Turner, *Samoa* (London, 1884), p. 295; compare *id.* p. 300.

[4] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 98. According to Mr. A. Grimble the word for soul is *taamnei* (*op. cit.* p. 36).

[5] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 98 *sq.*; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 88.

where the spirits pass their time in feasting, dancing, and whatever occupations were most agreeable to them in their bodily existence. This elysium is placed by some in the island of Tarawa. There may be seen several mounds or raised areas, of various sizes, the largest being about a mile long by half a mile broad. None of these mounds exceed twenty-four feet in height above the surrounding soil, but even so small an elevation suffices to make them conspicuous in these flat islands. Each of these mounds is supposed to be the seat of a *Kainakaki* or paradise, which is of course invisible to mortal eyes. The ground is deemed sacred, and no native would dare to cut down any of the trees by which it is usually overgrown. When a tree falls, it is taken away and another planted in its stead. If the persons who die are old and feeble, their shades are wafted to paradise by the spirits of those who have died before. The souls of infants are received by the shades of their female relatives, who nurse and bring them up till they are able to take care of themselves. But only persons who have been tattooed, being chiefly persons of free birth, can expect to reach the happy land. All others are intercepted on the way, and devoured by a monstrous giantess called Baine.[1]

Such was the belief of the Gilbert Islanders as to the state of the soul after death, as that belief was recorded by the American explorers under Commodore Wilkes. Their information appears to have been mainly derived from John Kirby, a British seaman, who had spent three years among the natives of Kuria, one of the islands. But the belief concerning the posthumous fate of the soul and the situation of deadland appears to have varied somewhat in the different islands. In the island of Tamana, according to Dr. George Turner, as soon as a member of a family died, the survivors cast lots about the spirit's destiny, as boys play at "odds and evens." If the small pebbles, which served as lots, turned out odds, then the soul at the horizon was crushed between two stones and blotted out of existence; if the pebbles turned out evens, the soul passed on to a region called Mane, where there was plenty of food and fine streams. The dying were urgent with their friends to manipulate the

Lots cast as to the destiny of the soul.

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 99; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 88 *sq.*

lots so as to secure for their souls an entrance into the abode of bliss.[1]

This account, obtained many years ago by the missionary Dr. George Turner, has recently been confirmed by the few old pagans left by the advance of Christianity on the island.[2]

Paradise tale in the Northern Gilberts.

The following is an epitome of the paradise tale common to many islands of the Northern Gilberts, as that tale has recently been recorded by Mr. Arthur Grimble.[3] It is said to represent fairly well the belief of all the islanders from Nonouti to Butaritari, though some of them do not remember all the details, and others record matter peculiar to themselves.

Passage of the soul to Matang-of-Samoa.

For three days after death the soul remained near the corpse, but, frightened at last by the burning appearance of its old body, it hurried away to begin its journey to the land of shades. Turning first to the eastward, it crossed the island to visit the ancestral spirit Tabakea, who lived among the trees by the ocean shore, awaiting there the souls in search of the last bourne. "Delay not," said he, "but go at once forward to the Lady Tituaa-bine, the ancestress, who dwells in Matang-of-Samoa; she will direct thee to thy northern home."

Southward then went the soul to Matang-of-Samoa, the wonderful land which harboured the fair-haired ancestors, but which yet was only a counterpart of that other and final Matang or paradise in the north, whither the spirits of the dead must ultimately tend. "This is not thy place," said the Lady Tituaa-bine; "turn again northward and journey until thou comest to Nakaa's land of Bouru, which is hard by Matang, for that is thy place."

The hag Kara-ma-kuna searches the soul for tattoo marks.

So, in the path that she had pointed out, the soul returned northward, walking on the sea as far as the southern end of the Gilbert Group, then leaping from island to island until it reached Makin, the most northerly island of the archipelago; thence it again walked on the face of the waters. Soon, in mid-ocean, its way was barred by the fearsome hag Kara-ma-kuna, daughter of Nakaa, the guardian of Bouru. Fast she gripped the soul and searched it for the marks of the tattooing-needle; these she scraped away with her long

[1] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 294.
[2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 48.
[3] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 49-51.

nails and swallowed, saying, "Pass from Manra, land of the living, to Bouru, land of the dead." Then she touched the soul's eyes with her hand, thus bestowing on them the vision of spirits, so that the way seemed no more dark, but clear and easy. But if she found no tattoo-marks, since food she must have, she plucked out the pupils of the soul's eyes and devoured them; and some say that the soul went blind thereafter, and never came to the land of Bouru, but most men believe that the hag Kara-ma-kuna would touch the sightless eyes, giving them the piercing visions of spirits, and so send the soul forward in peace.

The guardian Nakaa, his net, and his judgment.

Onwards again into the north went the soul, until it came to the land of Bouru, and Neineaba, and Matang. At the southern gate of Bouru sat the guardian Nakaa, awaiting the souls that came from Manra, the land of the living. And as he sat, he was for ever making nets, with his back turned to the path that led to the entrance of his dwelling-place, but well he knew when a soul crept up behind him. So, when it was near by his right hand, he reached forth and enmeshed it in the strand of his knitting-needle: he laid it across his knees: he searched its heart for evil. And if he found incest therein, or thievishness, or cowardice, he straightway cast the soul out of his sight into a place of everlasting nightmare called Te Kai-ni-kamatene, which signifies "The Punishment of Unrestful Sleep"; or he impaled it upon the terrible stakes called Kai-ni-kakeke; or he flung it into the midst of a company who writhed together in entanglement for ever and ever.

Some said that if a soul were adroit, it would pass craftily by Nakaa's left hand, so avoiding entanglement in his net; then might it look upon the land of Bouru for awhile and return once more to its earthly body. However, most men believed that escape from the guardian at the gate was impossible, and that judgment, the last judgment, was inevitable.

The soul passes three days at the entrance to Bouru.

But if the soul passed muster with Nakaa, the guardian of the gate, it must dwell for three days in his village, at the entrance to the land of Bouru and Neineaba. In that place was a fish-pond no more than ankle deep, but of a vast size, wherein lived only a single fish; and beside the fish-pond

grew a tree on which there was only one nut. And during its sojourn in Nakaa's realm the soul must live on the food of the fish-pond and the tree. Yet was its hunger always stayed, for no sooner was the one fish caught than another appeared in its stead, and no sooner was the one nut plucked than another grew in its room.

Final home of the soul in Bouru.

When the three days were accomplished, Nakaa said to the soul, "Enough! Thou hast repaid thy days of waiting beside thy body in Manra; pass on now into Bouru and Neineaba." So it went forward into its final home, where it rejoined the other spirits, and sat with them feasting on the food called *renga*, which is red in colour and therefore dear to Tituaa-bine, the ancestress, whose home is hard by, in the land of Matang. And sometimes the soul went northwards again, out of Bouru, to the place called Marira, where the dead may also live.

Variations in the story of the soul's destiny.

Such, as reported by Mr. Arthur Grimble, is the usual version of the tale. In the islands of Butaritari and Makin the families have a version of the story which gives fuller details as to the beings who bar the soul's progress to its last place of rest. These beings are mostly black man-eating hags, who frighten it with horrible mouthings and remind us of the bogeys encountered by Fijian souls on their way to the world of the dead.[1] In the islands of Butaritari and Makin the land of departed spirits is called Matang only, but on every other lagoon island Bouru and Neineaba, coupled together, are generally given as the name of that mysterious region; however, in some families the home of the guardian Nakaa is named Mwaiku. Lastly, Manra, the name generally applied to all the world of living men and women, is sometimes used in the Northern Gilberts to designate that particular stretch of sea trodden by the soul immediately before it arrives at Bouru, its final destination.[2]

Fate of soul partly dependent on moral conduct.

The preceding tale of the adventures of the soul after death is of interest in several ways. In the first place it proves that in the opinion of the Gilbert Islanders the destiny of the soul in the other world depended not a little upon its good or bad conduct in this world, since it was believed

[1] See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, i. 462 *sqq.*

[2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 51.

that impure, dishonest, and cowardly souls could not attain to the abode of bliss, but were cast by the great judge into a place of everlasting nightmare, or impaled on stakes, or thrown down to writhe for ever in a company of lost souls. Such a belief marks a very considerable moral advance upon the common savage notion that the fate of the soul in the world hereafter is quite independent of its good or evil conduct during the life on earth.

Clues to migrations of ancestors of the Gilbert Islanders.

In the second place the names of the regions through which the soul passes on its last journey, and to which it finally attains, are of interest as furnishing possible clues to the migrations of the ancestors of the Gilbert Islanders in past times; for it appears to be a common belief with savages that the dead return to that land on earth from which their ancestors are traditionally said to have come in the past. Now in the story of the adventures of the soul after death told by many Gilbert Islanders we have seen that the soul is said to come on its last journey to a place called Matang-of-Samoa. We can hardly doubt that the Samoa here mentioned is no other than the group of islands still known as Samoa. For to this day the Gilbert Islanders call themselves with pride "the children of the Tree of Samoa," or simply "the Breed of Samoa" (*te bu-n Tamoa*), though they pronounce the name Tamoa, not being able to enunciate the letter S; moreover, every genealogy which they possess traces the descent of the family from Samoa.[1] These traditions, coupled with the myth of the passage of the souls of the dead to Matang-of-Samoa, point, with a fair degree of probability, to the Gilbert Islanders, or a considerable portion of them, being the descendants of Samoans, who are supposed to have invaded and conquered the Gilbert Islands twenty-eight generations (about seven hundred years) ago.[2] Mr. Grimble, to whom we owe the record of the myth, has attempted to identify other places mentioned in it with real places; but his identifications are more or less speculative and uncertain.

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* p. 49. As to the inability of the Gilbert Islanders to pronounce the sound of S, for which they substitute T, see R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* p. 104. Dr. George Turner mentions that the natives of Tamana and Arorae spoke of Samoa as the cradle of their race (*Samoa*, pp. 293, 294).

[2] A. Grimble, p. 49.

For example, he notes the resemblance of the name of Bouru, the land of the dead, to the name of the East Indian island Buru, between Celebes and Ceram, and he inclines to regard the resemblance as more than a coincidence, since he finds several places in the neighbourhood of the island bearing names which approximate to the names of paradise in the language of the Gilbert Islanders. Thus he tells us that Matang, one of the names of the Gilbert Island paradise, has its counterparts in Mattang of Borneo, in Medang of Sumatra, in Maddang of Sumbawa, and in Malang of Java, possibly also in Sa-marang and Pa-malang of the same island. On the strength of these and similar resemblances of names he appears disposed to find among the Gilbert Islanders a dim tradition of the migration of their remote ancestors from Indonesia.[1] Such a migration is possible and even probable enough, but I cannot think that its probability is materially strengthened by comparing a number of Indonesian geographical names with a number of names of mythical places in the folk-lore of the Gilbert Islanders, to which they bear a more or less close or faint resemblance; for it might be hard to find any spot on earth from which, by a similar process of reasoning, it might not be possible, with an equal degree of plausibility, to derive the descent of the islanders in question. After all, the sounds which the human voice can produce are strictly limited in number; and, that being so, it is probable, or rather inevitable, that many words should resemble each other in languages which have no organic or historical relation to each other. Of all the clues employed to trace the migrations of peoples, that of etymology, applied to isolated words and not to languages as a whole, is perhaps the weakest and most unsatisfactory.

Home of departed spirits generally placed in the north.

Putting that difficult question aside, we may note that while some of the Gilbert Islanders, including the natives of Banaba or Ocean Island, believed in certain homes of the dead, which lie to the westward, the great majority of the people placed the spirit land in the north and not in the west.[2] We can therefore understand why it was that after a death they chased the ghost northward;[3] clearly

[1] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 49, 52 *sqq.*

[2] A. Grimble, *op. cit.* pp. 49, 52.

[3] See above, p. 43.

they imagined that by so doing they were compelling or assisting him to find his way to his last home in the spirit land somewhere away in the north.

§ 5. *The Gods of the Gilbert Islanders*

Thus the Gilbert Islanders believed in the survival of the human soul for an indefinite time after death, and they worshipped the spirits of their ancestors, with whom they kept up communication by means of their skulls. But, so far as appears, these ancestral spirits were worshipped only by their descendants; they were domestic deities, like the Lares and Penates of the Romans, not national divinities recognized and propitiated by all the people without distinction of family and kin. However, there were certain divinities who received the homage of worshippers in many islands far beyond the limits of a particular family. Among these more general deities, as we may call them, the most popular appears to have been a god called Tabuariki or Tapuariki; about two-thirds of the people are said to have prayed to him as their tutelary divinity. He was worshipped under the form of a flat coral stone of irregular shape, about three feet long by eighteen inches wide, which was set up on one end in the open air. Leaves of the coco-nut palm were tied round it, which considerably increased its apparent bulk and height. These leaves were changed every month, to keep them always green. The worship paid to the god consisted in repeating prayers before this stone, and laying before it a portion of the food prepared by the natives for their own use. This was done at their daily meals, at festivals, and whenever they particularly wished to propitiate the deity. The first fruits of the season were always offered to him. Every family of distinction had one of these stones, which was considered rather in the light of a family altar than as an idol.[1]

General deities.

The god Tabuariki.

[1] H. Hale, *Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition*, p. 97; Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 86. The form of the name is given as Tabueriki by Hale and Wilkes, as Tapuariki by Turner (*Samoa*, pp. 293, 296), and as Tabuarik by R. Parkinson (*op. cit.* p. 100). I follow Meinicke (*Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 337) in adopting the form Tabuariki, which, as he says, is probably Polynesian.

Tabuariki was the great god of the island of Nukunau, where he was supposed to come in the thunder.[1] In the island of Onoatoa he had a temple, of which the roof rested on stone pillars.[2] He had a temple also in the island of Arorae, and in the temple lay a great clam shell, thirty inches by eighteen, filled with water. All who brought offerings and came to pray dipped their hands in the water before they sat down, to signify their desire to be considered clean and free from sickness or other token of the wrath of the deity.[3] According to one account, Tabuariki lived above the stars and produced the thunder; his wife was Te Itji, the Lightning, who showed her countenance in the clouds when her husband thundered; no mortal man dared look her in the face, or, if he did so, he was struck dead on the spot. Tabuariki is said to have been formerly a chief, who, when he died, went up aloft, and from there still looks down on the Gilbert Islands. His worshippers stood in great awe of him, and the oracles which he vouchsafed by the mouth of his priests met with implicit belief and obedience. Every island had its priests or prophets, whose reputation, however, varied greatly. Some were believed to be on a footing of intimacy with the god, who often appeared to them, though naturally enough other people could neither see nor converse with him. Strangers would come from distant islands to consult these famous seers and to entreat their assistance.[4]

Tabuariki's oracle.

The mode in which the priest received the oracles of the god was as follows. On the sandy beach, at the weather side of the island, were several structures called spirit-houses (*bata n' anti*). They were of the usual size and shape of dwelling-houses, but the walls were built of coral stone, and they had no loft or upper story. The doorway was always on the western side because, we are told, the country of spirits lies in that direction. In the middle of the house a sort of altar or stout pillar of coral stone was built up to the height of three and a half feet, having in the middle a hollow about ten or twelve inches in

[1] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 296.

[2] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 299.

[3] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 294.

[4] R. Parkinson, "Beiträge zur Ethnologie der Gilbertinsulaner," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889) p. 100.

diameter. To this hollow the priest applied his ear and was supposed to receive the instructions of his divinity. But the house was not deemed essential to the divine revelation; the pillar sometimes stood uncovered on the beach,[1] and in that case the oracle was no doubt equally veracious.

Houses and lands of Tabuariki.

The houses of Tabuariki were asylums for hunted men: he who escaped to one of them was safe from his pursuers: no one would dare to shed blood in the house of the god. In some islands Tabuariki had, besides his houses, lands assigned to him, which were believed to be his favourite resorts. In time of peace no native would set foot on such holy ground; there they felled no trees and plucked no fruit; and if in time of war they were forced to trespass on the sacred precinct, they quitted it as soon as possible: no hostilities ever took place there. Sometimes Tabuariki assumed the form of a shark; hence his worshippers regarded sharks as sacred and would not kill them.[2]

Tabuariki as a shark.

The god Orierie.

Another high god revered by many of the Gilbert Islanders was Orierie. Of old his reputation is said to have stood as high as that of Tabuariki himself; but the greater success which attended the prophecies of Tabuariki's priests in time threw his rival into the shade. The form of worship of the two deities was alike. Orierie is reported to have been originally a great chief in Banaba or Ocean Island, but having fallen out with his kinsfolk he resolved to emigrate. Accordingly he packed up the portion of the island which belonged to him, and making a bundle of it, he carried it on a stick over his shoulder and walked across the sea to Maiana. There he dropped his burden, and there it may be seen down to this very day. It is a great bare stretch of land, perhaps of volcanic origin, rising some feet above the coralline flat; nothing will thrive on it except a few straggling bushes. These are the hair of Orierie, and woe to him who should dare to cut them down![3]

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 98, compare R. Parkinson, *l.c.* The general name for spirit or divinity was *anti*, which seems properly to signify a deified spirit (H. Hale, *l.c.*). Hence *bata n' anti*, "the house of the spirit."

[2] R. Parkinson, "Beiträge zur Ethnologie der Gilbertinsulaner," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, ii. (1889) pp. 100 *sq.*

[3] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* p. 101.

The god De Weia.

A third great god was De Weia. He was almost as powerful as Tabuariki, but men feared him more because he was exceedingly revengeful and killed out of hand anybody who in the very least offended him. He was particularly ruthless in his treatment of any sacrilegious persons who dared to appropriate any of the food that was destined for his divinity.[1]

The god Rigi, who separated the sky from the earth.

A fourth great god was Rigi. He it was who of old raised up the vault of heaven to make room on the earth for men, and animals, and plants. He sometimes assumed the shape of an eel ; hence his devotees would neither catch eels nor eat them.[2] He is said to have created the first human pair in Taputeuea or Drummond Island. The name of the first man was De Babou, and the name of the first woman was De Ai. Their creator forbade them to be fruitful and multiply ; but they disobeyed him, and the woman gave birth to three children, who were the Sun, the Moon, and the Salt Water. When the god heard of their disobedience, he snatched up a big cudgel and hastened to the spot to demolish the guilty pair. But they fell at his feet, and, by representing to him the great utility of their offspring, they contrived to appease his anger, so that he spared their lives.[3]

The four great gods commonly invoked.

These four great gods were invoked by their worshippers on the most diverse occasions. They were besought to send rain and to impart fertility to the ground : their help was asked for in war and on long voyages : they blessed the fisheries : in short, they were believed to regulate and order everything, and to visit their worshippers with good or evil fortune.[4]

The goddess Itivini.

A goddess named Itivini was adored by many of the Gilbert Islanders. She was reputed to be of a cruel disposition, and all the little children who died were thought to be killed and eaten by her. She was worshipped in a small circle, formed by a number of coral stones and covered with white gravel ; in the centre of the circle a coco-nut was set up. When prayers were offered to her, the nut was bound with a wreath of leaves and anointed with coco-nut oil.[5]

[1] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* p. 101.
[2] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* p. 101.
[3] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* pp. 104 *sq.*
[4] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* p. 101.
[5] Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 86.

Besides these divinities there were other gods and goddesses whom the people invoked on special occasions. The worship paid them resembled that of Tabuariki and his colleagues. Stones were set up and adorned in their honour: food was offered to them; and they were supposed to take up their abode temporarily in the stones. But they had no regular priests. Usually it was the head of the family to whom it fell to approach these special gods in prayer; hence every house had its sacred stone for this or that god, to whom the family appealed for help on various occasions.[1] The gods supposed to reside in stones.

Thus Nei de Tuabine was a goddess who lived in the sea and swam about in the shape of a sting-ray. She guarded her worshippers at sea, and when a canoe capsized she took the crew on her back and bore them to land. Hence her devotees never caught or ate the sting-ray.[2] Again, Nei de Wenei was another goddess, who had many zealous worshippers, for it was she who lured whales to the islands; hence in every island she had a special place where she loved to dwell. There offerings were brought to her, and there her priest or prophet declared to the people when a whale would approach their shores. She took the form of a small fish resembling a herring, which lured the whales to the reefs: hence the islanders would never catch that little fish. Once more, the goddess Nei Gibong was the patron of infants and of women with child. At child-birth she was entreated to take mother and child in her keeping, and she had priestesses, or rather old women, who were believed to stand in intimate relations with the goddess.[3] Goddesses.

We have seen that the god Rigi was believed to have raised the sky to its present height, for at first it hung very low down over the earth. This myth of the separation of heaven and earth was widely diffused in the Gilbert Islands, and was told with a variety of details in different places. Thus in Tamana they related how of old the sky rested on the earth, and how it was pushed up by a man Liki,[4] whose name is doubtless only dialectically different from Rigi. In Nukunau, another of the Gilbert Islands, they said that Myth of the separation of heaven and earth.

[1] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* p. 101.
[2] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* pp. 101 *sq.*
[3] R. Parkinson, *op. cit.* pp. 101 *sq.*
[4] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 293.

in the beginning there was universal darkness, and that the sky was low down and rested on the earth, until it was raised by two brothers, Naleau and Laki. They had a third brother, whose right eye was plucked out and thrown up into the heavens, where it became the sun; the other eye was flung up and became the moon. In the same island it was believed that man had been developed out of the fish of the sea.[1] In Peru, another of the Gilbert Islands, the severance of heaven and earth was ascribed to the god Naleu, who propped the sky up on long poles.[2] The same story was told, with some variations, in the island of Onoatoa. There it was said that of old the heavens and the earth were united. Walking about on the flat heavens, the great god Naleau heard stones rumbling below. He made an opening, went down, and induced the sea-serpent to stand erect and push up the heavens. After that the stones became men.[3] In the island of Peru fire was said to have been obtained from Tangaloa of the heavens by an old woman, who put it in a tree and bade the people elicit it by the friction of wood; ever since men have cooked their food by fire.[4]

Traces of totemism.

From the foregoing account we see that the Gilbert Islanders revered certain species of fish, for example, eels, sharks, and sting-rays, and regarded them as the embodiments of certain great deities. In general, we are informed by Commodore Wilkes that they worshipped certain birds, fish, and animals, and that while they always refused to eat the worshipful creatures, they would readily catch them that others, who had no such scruples, might partake of their flesh.[5] This brief statement points to the existence of a system of animal worship like that which prevailed in Samoa,[6] from which, indeed, it may have been imported by the ancient immigrants. Perhaps the system, like that of Samoa, may have been ultimately based on totemism. Indeed in Nauru or Pleasant, an island lying to the west of the

[1] G. Turner, *Samoa*, pp. 296 *sq.*

[2] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 297.

[3] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 299. This form of the myth is noticed also by R. Parkinson (*op. cit.* p. 104), though he substitutes an eel for the sea-serpent.

[4] G. Turner, *Samoa*, p. 297.

[5] Ch. Wilkes, *op. cit.* v. 86.

[6] See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 182 *sqq.*

Gilbert group, the population seems to be actually divided into totemic clans, which are exogamous, marriage with a woman of the same totem being regarded as incest: one of the clans has the eel for its totem. There is a legend that all the clans issued at the same time from a cave in the east of the island.[1]

Ancestor worship.

In the island of Makin, according to the Scotch seaman Grey or Wood, the names of Tabuariki, Itivini, and the other great deities were unknown, and the only spirits worshipped by the natives were those of their ancestors. When a chief died, a stone like that dedicated in the other islands to Tabuariki was set up and dressed in the same manner with leaves. The reverence done to it, like that offered to the stones of Tabuariki, took the form of a presentation of food accompanied with prayers. From this resemblance between the worship of Tabuariki and the worship of the dead, the American ethnologist Hale inferred that the deities adored in the southern islands were only deified chiefs, the memory of whose existence on earth had been lost with the lapse of time.[2] Indeed, with regard to two of the principal of these deities, namely Tabuariki and Orierie, we have seen that the natives have definite traditions of their human origin; both these gods are said to have been chiefs on earth before they ascended to the sky and attained to the rank of divinities.[3] The tradition may be historically correct. In the history

[1] Al. Kayser, "Die Eingebornen von Nauru (Südsee)," *Anthropos*, xii.-xiii. (1917–1918) pp. 329 *sq.* The writer of this article, Father Kayser, spent eleven years continuously on the island, and appears to be intimately acquainted with the people and their language. Unfortunately the controversial and allusive character of the article renders it difficult to extract precise information from it. The writer seems to say that in the clans succession is traced only through the eldest daughter of the principal branch of the clan ("*Die Sippenfolge vererbt sich nur durch die älteste Tochter des Hauptstammes der Sippe*," p. 329), which appears to imply the existence of mother-kin, that is, the custom of tracing descent exclusively through women. But as he defines neither clan (*Sippe*) nor branch (*Stamm*) nor their relation to each other, it is impossible to be sure of his meaning. The work which in this article Father Kayser subjects to very severe criticism is a bulky monograph in quarto on the island by Dr. Paul Hambruch (*Nauru*, Hamburg, L. Friedrichsen & Co., 1914, forming part of *Ergebnisse der Südsee Expedition 1908–1910*, herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. G. Thilenius, II. *Ethnographie B. Mikronesien*, Band I.). According to Father Kayser, Dr. Hambruch knew practically nothing ("*so viel wie gar nichts*") of the difficult native language, and the three natives on whose evidence he relied were totally untrustworthy.

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 97.

[3] Above, pp. 56, 57.

of religion few things appear to be commoner than the deification of men whose humble origin has in time been forgotten by their worshippers. *Sic itur ad astra.* Other gods in the Gilbert Island pantheon may well have been evolved in similar fashion from the spirits of the dead.

CHAPTER III

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AMONG THE MARSHALL ISLANDERS

§ 1. *The Marshall Islands*

The Marshall Islands

THE Marshall Islands compose a widely scattered archipelago of low coralline islands lying in the angle between the Caroline Islands to the west and the Gilbert Islands to the south. Its various groups range from about 4° to 12° of North latitude and from 165° to 172° of East longitude. The archipelago consists of two lines or chains of islands lying nearly parallel to each other at a distance of from one hundred to three hundred miles, and extending in a direction from north-west to south-east. The western chain of islands is called Ralik and the eastern Ratak or Radack. In the old days the natives of the two chains had comparatively little intercourse with each other, but spent much time in voyaging among the groups of islands of their own particular chain. The exact date of the discovery of the archipelago is uncertain. The usual account given of it is that in 1529 the Spanish navigator Alvaro de Saavedra visited the islands on his attempted return to New Spain from the East Indies, and that observing the tattooing of the natives, which he seems to have taken for painting, he called them Los Pintados.[1]

Nature of atolls.

With two exceptions all the islands are atolls, that is,

[1] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1862*, pp. 298, 302; C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 316; Carl Hager, *Die Marshall-Inseln* (Leipzig, 1886), p. 27; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, *s.v.* "Micronesia," xvi. 257; A. Erdland, *Die Marshall-Insulaner* (Münster i. W. 1914), pp. 3 *sq.*

circular or oval reefs of coral, each enclosing a central lagoon with islets dotted at intervals along the reef. Thus an atoll is not strictly speaking an island, though it usually comprises a group of small islands extending in a circle and connected with each other by the reef, which at low water allows of passage on foot from one islet to another. The reef acts as a dam or breakwater which protects the central lagoon from the billows of the ocean; but on the leeward side of the atoll the reef is regularly broken in one or more places, thus affording to ships an entrance from the open sea into the comparatively calm water of the lagoon. The ring or oval formed by the reef is often of great extent; the lagoon which it encloses may measure from eight to sixty miles across. On the other hand the islets which stud the reef are usually very narrow, seldom measuring more than a few hundred yards in breadth and often narrowing down to a few feet. At such points the waves of the open sea roll over the strip of land into the lagoon. Nowhere does the land rise more than a few feet above the level of the sea, and on none of the atolls does it stretch in a continuous circle all along the reef; often the islets are miles apart, though usually it is possible even at high water to pass from one to the other by wading waist deep in the water.[1] The number of islets on an atoll naturally varies with the size of the atoll; on Mille or Mulgrave Islands, where the lagoon measures a hundred and forty miles in circumference, there are more than a hundred islets dotted at intervals along the reef, but their total area is probably not more than fifteen or twenty square miles.[2] The largest islands are found on the eastern or windward side of the atoll. For the storms which occur during the prevalence of the north-east monsoon shatter the edge of the reef, and hurling the fragments of the coral on the shore gradually build up or extend an island. On the other hand the storms on the western or leeward side are less frequent, and the surf less violent, with the result that the formation of islets in that part of the reef proceeds more slowly.[3] As the islands rise so little above

[1] A. Erdland, *Die Marshall-Insulaner*, pp. 5 *sqq.*

[2] H. Hale, *Ethnography and Philology of the United States Exploring Expedition*, p. 88.

[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 7.

the level of the sea, they are liable to be swept at intervals by tidal waves which pour over the flat land, drowning many of the people, destroying the vegetation, and even washing away the sandy soil so as to leave nothing but the bare coralline rock behind. Yet when the cataclysm is over, the survivors soon return and repeople their desolated homes.[1] Naturally such waves are greatly dreaded, and at the first sign of their approach the natives resort to magical ceremonies in the hope of averting the threatened calamity.[2]

Luxuriant vegetation.

It might be thought that with a scanty soil thinly spread over the coral rock, no bush or tree could thrive on the islands. But the contrary is the case. Tropical heat and an abundant rainfall combine to lend so luxuriant a fertility to the ground that in a state of nature the islands present the appearance of continuous and impenetrable thickets, through which a sunbeam can hardly penetrate to the humid earth. On the eastern or windward side of the islands these thickets are allowed to stand untouched by the axe in order to form a screen from the salt spray, which would else be blown in a grey mist across the island from the beach where the great rollers break in thunder on the reef. Behind this screen flourish the cultivated trees, the coco-nut palm, the bread-fruit tree, and the pandanus or screw-pine, which together constitute the chief representatives of plant life and furnish the natives with their staple foods.[3] Of the three trees the pandanus is by much the most important as a source of nourishment for the inhabitants. In the Marshall Islands as well as in the Gilbert Islands the natives could use up the greater part of their coco-nuts in the manufacture of oil and still live in luxury on the luscious drupes of the pandanus. When the fruit is in season for several months of the year they eat little else, besides preserving large quantities of it for future use. The preserve is very palatable even to foreigners. It is put up in large rolls, wrapt in the leaves of the tree, and

Three sorts of cultivated trees.

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 17 *sq.*

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 320 *sq.*

[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 8 *sq.*, 37 *sqq.* As to the fruit-trees, see A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 212 *sqq.*; O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea* (London, 1821), iii. 150 *sqq.*; H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 88 *sq.*; Franz Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen* (Berlin, N.D.), p. 76.

then tightly bound with cords. In this state it may be kept many years: it does not suffer by exposure to the weather nor even by submersion in the sea; hence it is excellent provender on a voyage. The pandanus tree itself often grows as high as a coco-nut palm; in the Gilbert Islands its straight tough trunk is used in preference to any other wood for the construction of their largest and finest council-houses.[1] Apart from these three trees the vegetation is scanty.[2]

§ 2. *The Islanders and their Mode of Life*

Appearance of the islanders.

In appearance the natives resemble the Caroline Islanders, except that they are a little coarser and more vigorous in their manners and perhaps of a rather darker complexion.[3] They are thick-set and of middle height; men over six feet are rare and tall women still rarer. Their colour is dark brown; the lighter the shade the more it is esteemed. The hair is soft and black, but streaked with chestnut brown in early years. In some individuals the hair is naturally wavy, in others smooth, the difference pointing to a mixture of races. The eyes are coffee-brown, the lips thick, the cheek-bones a little prominent, and the teeth white. The nose is straight but flat and somewhat wide at the nostrils; the bridge of the nose is sunk. The bold rounded chin harmonizes with the broad but slightly retreating forehead and the elongated outline of the face. The beard is generally scanty and confined to a tuft under the chin, with a few bristles under the nose; sometimes, however, there may be seen men with flowing beards which remind the observer of the hairy Ainos.[4] A case has even been reported of a man

[1] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1862*, pp. 304 *sq.* As to the mode of making the pandanus preserve, see F. Hernsheim, *op. cit.* p. 82; A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 39 *sq.* As to the pandanus and its utility to the natives, see also O. von Kotzebue, *op. cit.* iii. 150 *sq.*; C. Hager, *Die Marshall-Inseln*, pp. 55 *sq.*; C. M. Woodford, "The Gilbert Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, vi. (1895) p. 329.

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 9.

[3] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* pp. 302 *sq.*

[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 12 *sq.* Compare F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, p. 77; C. Hager, *Die Marshall Insulaner*, pp. 70 *sqq.* The last of these writers describes the figure of the islanders as slender ("*bei schlankem Wuchs*"), wherein he differs from Erdland, who speaks of it as thick-set ("*von untersetztem Körperbau*").

whose beard reached to his knee.[1] It is believed that the natives are descendants of immigrants from the Caroline Islands. They have legends of canoes which drifted from the west to the northern atolls of the Ralik chain, and in fact during the prevalence of the north-east monsoon a strong current sets eastward, which could drift a canoe from the Carolines to the Marshalls in from ten to fifteen days. Moreover, the speech of the Marshall Islanders exhibits an unmistakeable affinity with the language of the eastern Caroline Islanders. On the southern atolls of the Ratak chain, however, there has been an amalgamation with the Gilbert Islanders, and as a consequence an approximation to the Polynesian type is there perceptible in the population. As a strong current sets regularly in the summer months from the Gilbert Islands to Ebon, the most southerly atoll of the Marshall Islands, the approximation of the natives to the Polynesian type would probably have been still closer, if they had not been in the habit of murdering all strangers who land on the island.[2]

Population.

Some ten years ago the population of the islands was estimated at barely 12,000. Its supposed decrease was attributed to the ravages of venereal diseases imported by white men and especially by the crews of American whalers, diseases which, if not checked by effective measures, threatened to wipe out the native population entirely.[3]

Personal adornment

In the adornment of their persons the natives practised the remarkable custom, by no means peculiar to them, of piercing the lobe of the ear and distending it to an enormous size by inserting in the aperture a roll of pandanus leaf, which was exchanged for a thicker one daily. Thus stretched, the lobe often reached down to the shoulder; some of the natives, especially those of Ralik, are said to have been able to draw it over their head.[4] Both sexes are tattooed and put

Tattooing.

[1] O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea*, iii. 160; A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 222 note**.

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 11 *sq.*

[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 15 *sq.* However, in 1862 the total population had been estimated by Gulick ("Micronesia," *op. cit.* pp. 301 *sq.*) at something over 10,000. If the two estimates are correct, it would follow that the population had not decreased in the interval.

[4] O. von Kotzebue, *op. cit.* iii. 160 *sq.*; A. von Chamisso, *op. cit.* ii. 222 *sq.*; H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 90; F. Hernsheim, *op. cit.* p. 77; C. Hager, *op. cit.* p. 73; A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 19.

their pride in this decoration of their person. But to be fully tattooed is a privilege of noble families ; ordinary people are allowed to indulge in this display only to a limited extent. With the women only the arms and the shoulders are thus decorated. In former times the process of tattooing noble men and women was attended with much ceremony. No woman might look at a man who was being operated on ; and until his wounds were healed, the hut in which the operation took place was surrounded by men to prevent any female from seeing the pattern incised on his body. During the whole of the time that the tattooing lasted the ordinary words for "man" and "woman" might not be pronounced, and other words were substituted for them.[1]

Character of the people.

The character of the Marshall Islanders has been painted in very different colours by European travellers who have visited the islands. The poet and naturalist, Chamisso, who accompanied the Russian exploring expedition to the Pacific under Otto von Kotzebue in the years 1815 to 1818, drew an idyllic picture of these savages, thereby earning for them celebrity and investing them with a reputation for virtues, to some at least of which it appears that they can lay but little claim. Through the golden haze of his poetic imagination he saw in them a people lively, curious, clever, brave, honourable, hospitable, modest, truthful ; he celebrated the innocence and the elegance of their manners, their delicate sense of shame, and their exceptional cleanliness ; and he found everywhere in these isles of Eden the image of peace and progress.[2]

Many years later a German traveller, Dr. Finsch, declared that the islanders were lazy, ignorant, sensuous, given to lying and stealing, with no sense of gratitude, hospitality, or honour in our sense, destitute of energy, unsympathetic, dull, yet friendly, good-natured, not cruel or unfeeling, on the whole peaceful, without courage and valour in war. But this general condemnation the doctor softened by remarking that it only applied in a certain degree to some individuals, and he wound up by confessing that he had known some

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 19-23. Compare O. von Kotzebue, *op cit.* iii. 161 ; A. von Chamisso, *op. cit.* ii. 223 ; F. Hernsheim, *op. cit.* pp. 77-79 ; C. Hager, *op. cit.* pp. 73 *sq.*

[2] A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 226 *sq.* ; A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 137.

natives who were very good fellows.[1] Finally, Father Erdland, who, as a Catholic missionary living among the people and speaking their language, enjoyed better opportunities than his predecessors of knowing them intimately, tells us that in his opinion they are lively, clever, full of feeling, hospitable, peaceful, brave at sea, yet deceitful, sensuous, and weak of will.[2]

Dress. In the old days the dress of the men consisted of strips of hibiscus bark forming a kilt, which was suspended on a girdle and reached from the waist to the knees. It was dyed red or black according to the taste of the wearer; nobles wore it shorter than commoners and brighter and more variegated in colour. The dress of the women was composed of two mats made of pandanus leaves and reaching from the hips to the ankles, both being supported by a girdle. Mats and girdles were characteristic manufactures of women. The materials employed were narrow strips of pandanus leaves, sun-dried bark of the *Triumfetta procumbens*, and the black bark of the hibiscus polished with the juice of the mangrove fruit.[3]

Houses. Before the introduction of European houses the native dwellings were built in the shape of a parallelogram, divided into two stories, and covered by a thatched roof of pandanus leaves supported on four posts. The lower or ground story communicated with the upper through a scuttle or hatch; it was not more than three feet high, so that the inmates were obliged to remain in a sitting or reclining posture. They slept either in the lower or in the upper story. A coarse mat served for a bed, and a block of wood for a pillow.[4]

Food. The diet of the natives consists of coco-nuts, pandanus, taro, arrowroot, fish, and crustacea. The arrowroot is obtained on the northern atolls of both chains of islands.[5] The bread-fruit as well as the fruit of the pandanus is made into a preserve and stored for future use. For this purpose

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 137 *sq.*

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 138.

[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 23-25. Compare O. von Kotzebue, *op. cit.* iii. 161 *sq.*; L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 303; F. Hernsheim, *op. cit.* p. 79; C. Hager, *op. cit.* p 72.

[4] O. von Kotzebue, *op. cit.* iii. 162 *sq.*; A. von Chamisso, *op. cit.* ii. 224 *sq.*; H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 90; C. Hager, *op. cit.* p. 77; A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 31 *sqq.*

[5] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 37, 38.

the bread-fruit is either, like the pandanus, dried in the sun or steeped in salt water. In the latter case the fruit is peeled and cut in pieces, after which it is packed in baskets and sunk in the lagoon. There the mass is allowed to soak for three days, after which it is taken out, and, having repeatedly undergone a process of pounding and kneading, is stowed away in a pit lined with pandanus leaves, from which the family extracts portions from time to time according to their need. The process of kneading is repeated at least once a month. At the opening of the pit the decomposing mass emits a foul odour. Baked in a trough with arrowroot meal, the stuff is consumed with relish by the natives.[1] The foresight thus displayed in providing for a time of scarcity marks a degree both of intelligence and of self-denial of which men in the lowest stage of savagery are incapable. Fish are eaten either raw or broiled, smoked, salted, or dried in the sun, but never boiled in water. The natives say that Europeans are foolish to boil fish in water, because the boiling robs the fish of its natural flavour.[2] Some fish possess a sacred or totemic character in the eyes of the islanders; others may be eaten only by chiefs.[3]

Fishing.

Contrary to the statements of some European observers, the Marshall Islanders are diligent and experienced fishermen. This is natural enough, since fish has always been a necessary and important article of their very limited diet; indeed, they relish it so much that they experience a ravenous appetite for it after a few days of compulsory abstinence. No doubt their fishing-tackle was scanty, and during the season of the monsoon the stormy sea furnished but a meagre booty. Yet they compensated these disadvantages by a close observation of the habits of each sort of fish as well as of the seasons at which shoals of certain species appear on their coasts. As a result of their observation they ingeniously adapted the nature of their tackle to the particular nature of the fish. Nets, hooks made of the pearl shell, and fishing incantations have been familiar to them from time immemorial.[4] It was especially in the

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 40 *sq.*
[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 41.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 43.
[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 46 *sq.*

catch of flying fish that the fisherman resorted to magical spells for the purpose of luring his prey to its doom. While he sailed up and down in his canoe, dangling a sort of hook made of coco-nut shell at the end of a short line, he would coax the flying fish to come into the canoe and take shelter from the blazing sun in a nice soft mat, which a damsel had sent from the shore for the purpose. If these blandishments proved effectual, the angler changed his tune and mocked the fish as it flapped about in the bottom of the boat.[1] Some fish are caught in weirs built of stone near the shore of the lagoon; others are speared in such numbers at low water on the reef that the sea is red with their blood.[2] The language of the islanders is rich in expressions for every mode and variety of fishing; most of the lagoons abound in fish, the number of which appear to be thinned neither by the constant catch of the natives nor by the swarms of hungry sharks which lurk at the mouths of the lagoons to prey on the shoals as they swim out and in.[3] The fishermen of to-day have ceased to observe certain superstitious practices which their predecessors scrupulously observed in days of old. For example, no fisherman might pass by a grave nor take cooked food with him to sea, except when he went to catch flying fish; and while the fishing was going on, the wives of the fishermen at home might neither prepare nor execute any work which involved plaiting.[4] The motive for this last taboo is not mentioned; we may conjecture that it was a fear lest, on the principles of homœopathic magic, the crossing of the plaits should cross and confuse the path of the fisherman at sea.

Fishing taboos.

But it was in the construction of their canoes that the Marshall Islanders displayed their mechanical skill to most advantage, in spite of the extreme simplicity and limited number of their tools, which comprised hardly more than an axe made of the shell of the giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*), and a borer, which consisted of a straight stick pointed with a shark's tooth and provided at the middle with a disc to

Canoes.

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 48 *sq.*

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 51 *sq.*

[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 54 *sq.*

[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 54. As to the catching of the sea-slugs which visit the lagoons in immense swarms at certain times of the year, see F. Hernsheim, *op. cit.* pp. 83 *sq.* He describes the slug as a very small sardine.

assist the rotation. The wood usually employed for building a canoe is that of the bread-fruit tree, but drift timber cast up by the waves on the shore is also turned to account for the same purpose. In the old days many of the canoes were of great size, capable of carrying from fifty to a hundred men. Nowadays, they measure at the most thirty feet and hold thirty persons.[1] One side of the vessel is flat or perpendicular, while the other is convex, and to it is attached the outrigger. The canoe is very sharp, not only at its two ends, but along its whole keel. It settles deep in the water, and, by carrying its outrigger to windward and its flat side to leeward, it can sail very close to the wind. The natives provision their canoes with coco-nuts, preserved bread-fruit and pandanus, taro and water, and can, when occasion requires, by their skill in fishing and catching rain water, support a voyage of several months. This explains the apparently fabulous accounts of their drifting three, four, and five months without seeing land, and it may help us to understand how these and other Pacific islands were first peopled. Of all the islanders of the Pacific the natives of the Marshall Islands were perhaps the greatest voyagers. They have a very accurate knowledge of the islands of their own seas and a wonderful skill in navigation. They even constructed rude maps by which they retained and imparted knowledge regarding the direction and relative distances of the various atolls. These maps consisted of small sticks tied together in straight or curved lines, intended to represent the currents or waves to be encountered, while the islands were indicated at certain points where these lines met. The construction of the maps was a secret which the chiefs desired to keep to themselves; the first person who divulged the art to a missionary was threatened with death, though he was a man of good position, being the husband of a noblewoman.[2]

Skill in navigation.

Knowledge of the stars.

The knowledge of the stars, by which the natives steered on their voyages from island to island, was also a carefully guarded secret, which was handed down from generation to

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 55 *sq.*; L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* p. 303; F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, pp. 90 *sqq.*; C. Hager, *Die Marshall-Inseln*, pp. 85 *sq.*

[2] L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* pp. 303 *sq.*

generation in certain families. The adepts were not necessarily chiefs; they were unusually intelligent and observant individuals, who transmitted their star-lore by inheritance to their descendants. Even within the limits of the family the knowledge was not equally diffused. A father had generally among his children some favourite to whom rather than to the others he communicated what he had learned by tradition or observation; and the child so favoured might be either a son or a daughter. Families thus possessed of a knowledge of the stars were highly esteemed alike by chiefs and commoners; they enjoyed a better social position, which brought with it some material advantages in the ownership or usufruct of land, as well as certain privileges, which were generally reserved for chiefs, such as the right of walking on the weather or windward side of an island.[1] The number of stars and constellations for which the islanders had native names was at least sixty-four; among them, curiously enough, were many stars of inferior magnitude, while many stars of the first magnitude, such as Sirius, had no name at all. About some of the heavenly bodies they told myths.[2] For example, they regarded Capella as the mother of all the great stars, and they related a race which her sons ran in canoes for the kingship of the stars. In this race her youngest son Jabro, that is, the Pleiades, with his mother's help, beat his eldest brother Dumur, that is, the star Antares, and thus became King of the Stars. Chagrined at his defeat, the eldest brother vowed that he would never see his younger brother again; that is why the star Antares sets in the west when the Pleiades rise in the east.[3]

Taboos observed at sea.

In the old days, when the natives were at sea, they observed certain superstitious rules, which have now fallen into disuse. For example, they might not tell stories, and at nightfall a woman might not cover her face, because they believed that, if she did so, the stars would not shine. All the time they were sailing, special names were employed to designate persons, foods, and parts of the canoe, and no man of the lowest rank was allowed to look out for

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 76 *sq.* [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 78-80.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 83 *sq.*

land or to mention the names of the islands which they approached.[1]

Social ranks.

Socially, the people were broadly divided into two classes, nobles and commoners; but each of these classes was again subdivided in two. Thus the nobility comprised high nobles (*iroj*) and low nobles (*buirak*), or head chiefs and under chiefs; and the commoners comprised gentlefolk (*läadökdök*) or councillors and commoners (*kajur*) or subjects. As the system of mother-kin prevailed, children took the rank of their mother, not that of their father. For example, a high nobleman (*iroj*) had a high noblewoman (*liroj*) for his mother; but his father might be a high nobleman, a low nobleman, a simple gentleman, or a commoner. A low nobleman (*buirak*) had a low noblewoman (*libuirak*) for his mother; but his father might be a high nobleman, a low nobleman, a simple gentleman, or a commoner.[2]

Chiefs.

A chief was the absolute ruler of his subjects and the absolute owner of his lands, whether he was a head chief or an under chief, and he might dispose of his lands at pleasure, whether by sale or otherwise. The landed estate of an under chief might be larger than that of a head chief; but large or small, it was only on his own lands that a chief, whether of the first or of the second rank, possessed sovereign power over his people.[3]

Gentlemen.

A simple gentleman (*läadökdök*) was a commoner who, by his intellectual ability or services on land or sea, had distinguished himself and had been rewarded with a landed estate, which he held by a sort of feudal tenure as the vassal of a chief either of the first or of the second class. His rank and title descended by inheritance in his family. He was bound to stand by his liege lord in action and to assist him with his advice; and though the lord was under no obligation to consult his liegemen officially or publicly, he would often lend a willing ear to their advice. He did so all the more readily because in former years many of the gentlefolk were at the same time magicians and acted as masters of the ceremonies at religious festivals. To this day these gentlefolk rank as sages, and as such enjoy a

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 59. [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 99.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 99, 100.

high reputation both with chiefs and commoners. Most of the men who possess a knowledge of the stars and skill in navigation belong to this class and endeavour to transmit their lore to their posterity.[1]

Commoners.

Between commoners and chiefs there is an impassable gulf. The mere commoner owns no land and enjoys no rights; he earns his subsistence by cultivating the land of a nobleman and by looking after his master's interests.[2]

Property in land.

All property in land belongs exclusively to the chiefs, whether of the first or the second class. But it is seldom that the whole land of an island belongs to a single chief; usually it is parcelled out among several.

Duties of commoners.

The business of the commoner or subject is to cultivate the chief's estate; to plant it with coco-nut palms, bread-fruit trees, and pandanus, and, if the nature of the soil permits of it, to lay out beds of taro and groves of bananas; but he is also bound to do any other sort of work for his master without payment. Wherever the chief may happen to be, his subjects are obliged to supply him with provisions, even if they themselves have to go hungry. Nevertheless, like the clansmen of old in the highlands of Scotland, they display a remarkable degree of personal loyalty and devotion to their chief, even to the extent of despising their own life if they can only save his. In the year 1905, while a great hurricane swept over one of the islands, most of the natives gathered round their head chief and propped up his house lest it should be blown away by the wind. When a missionary asked them why they did not take refuge in the warehouse of a European company, where they would have been safer, they answered, "You whites may die with your ruler; we go to death with our chief."[3]

Rights of chiefs.

All the produce of the land from January to July is the special property of the chief, but the chief's subjects are allowed to appropriate the fruit of the coco-nut palms during the other half of the year.[4] Nevertheless, all that they possess they hold only on sufferance; the chief may always take whatever he pleases of it for himself. Nor is his right of appropriation confined to their property, it extends to their

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 101 *sq.*
[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 102.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 111.
[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 108, 111.

person. He can summon the wives and daughters of his subjects to his bed, and he enjoys the *jus primae noctis*, the right to deflower every marriageable maiden; indeed, if we may trust the evidence of a Catholic missionary, the right is even now exercised by chiefs who have adopted the Protestant faith and pass for zealous members of the Church.[1]

Classificatory system of kinship.

The system of relationship recognized by the Marshall Islanders is the one known as classificatory,[2] which groups together under one head many relationships that we regard as quite distinct from each other. The system is characteristic of savagery; more and more, as time goes on and our knowledge of backward peoples increases, it becomes plain that the classificatory system of relationship, bewilderingly complex as it is apt to appear to the civilized observer, has prevailed generally, if not universally, among the uncivilized races of mankind.

Cousin marriage.

A common feature of the system is the strong preference for certain marriages between cousins and the absolute prohibition of others, and this feature is found, in one of its most characteristic forms, in the marriage rules of the Marshall Islanders; for they forbid cousins, who are the children of two sisters or of two brothers, to marry each other, but they not only allow but favour the marriage of cousins who are the children of a brother and a sister respectively.[3] This distinction between marriageable and non-marriageable cousins is of fundamental importance in the social life of savages in many parts of the world; to all appearance it is exceedingly ancient and may perhaps even date from the institution of the marriage system.[4]

Relationship of a man to his maternal uncles and aunts.

Another feature of the classificatory system of relationship in some tribes is a peculiarly intimate relationship between a man and his maternal uncle, that is, his mother's brother, in virtue of which the nephew often enjoys and exercises a remarkable degree of authority over his uncle. This curious custom prevails among the Marshall Islanders with a certain limitation in one direction but with very considerable extensions in others. Thus we are told that a

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* 112 *sq.*, compare 135.

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 114.

[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 114.

[4] See *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, ii. 98 *sqq.*

nephew is entitled to be treated with ceremonious respect by all the younger brothers and sisters of both his parents, in other words by all his uncles and aunts both on the paternal and on the maternal side, so far as these uncles and aunts are younger than his father and mother. They are not allowed to embrace their nephew, nor to lie on the same mat with him, nor to accompany him to the outer beach of the island. They may not utter a disrespectful word in his presence, nor taste the food which he has touched, nor reproach him for any fault or offence which he may have committed. And if the nephew is a first-born son, he has a right to command his uncles and aunts, the younger brothers and sisters of his parents, and they are bound to obey him implicitly. And the same ceremonious respect which they show to him, he must show to his wife's parents.[1]

Privileges of first-born sons.

Another remarkable privilege enjoyed by a first-born son was that of cohabiting with the wives of his younger brothers, while on the other hand the younger brothers were permitted access to their eldest brother's wife in his absence. The first-born son was also at liberty to put away his wife and marry the wives of his younger brothers.[2] These usages point to a former system of group marriage, in which all the husbands were brothers.

Levirate and sororate.

Yet another very common feature or accompaniment of the classificatory system is the observance of the two marriage customs known as the levirate and the sororate respectively. In virtue of the levirate a man is bound to marry the widow of his deceased brother; in virtue of the sororate a man has the right to marry all his wife's sisters either in her lifetime or successively after her death.[3] Both these customs are practised by the Marshall Islanders. On the death of a chief, his brother or another near relation must marry the widow; and a man has the right to cohabit with his wife's sisters, apparently in her lifetime.[4]

Totemism and Exogamy

Once more a common accompaniment of the classificatory system is totemism, and totemism also occurs among the

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 115.

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 197 note 2.

[3] See *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, ii. 263 *sqq.*

[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 115.

Marshall Islanders; for they are divided into totemic clans, which are exogamous with descent in the female line:[1] in other words, a man may not marry a woman of his own clan, and his children belong not to his clan, but to the clan of their mother. So strictly is the rule of exogamy observed that a breach of it between members of the same clan is regarded as incest.[2] Every clan has its totem (*wunenak*), which may be an animal, a tree, or a lifeless object, such as a stone; but no clan takes its name from its totem. Among the totems are thunder, the shark, a species of bird, and several kinds of shrubs, including the hibiscus.[3] Unfortunately Father Erdland, to whom we owe the record of totemism among the Marshall Islanders, only discovered the existence of the system shortly before his departure from the islands, so that he was unable to investigate the subject thoroughly, and in particular to ascertain what idea the natives attach to the totem; and the enquiry was all the more difficult because the system appeared to be in process of decay. However, he thought that the idea of a guardian spirit might answer most nearly to the native conception of a totem. In illustration he tells us that at the island of Nauru there was killed a certain fish which has a monstrous mouth and is in the habit of devouring human beings. When the members of a certain family heard of the killing of the fish, they cried out, "Our guardian spirit is killed. Now we must die."[4] The exclamation suggests that the lives or external souls of the family were thought to be in the fish, so that, when it was killed, they must simultaneously perish. With regard to the island of Nauru, which does not strictly belong to the Marshall Islands, but lies at a considerable distance to the west of the Gilbert Islands, we have already found independent evidence of the existence of totemism among the islanders.[5]

Sexual morality.

The relations between the sexes before marriage are exceedingly loose; virginity among the girls is said to be unknown. As happens in many savage tribes, both sexes give free rein to their passions even before the attainment

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 116.
[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 116.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 343 *sq.*
[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 116 *sq.*
[5] Above, pp. 60 *sq.*

of puberty, and parents hardly venture to impose any check on their children. In consequence, faithfulness in marriage is a very rare virtue ;[1] the smallest cause suffices to furnish a pretext for divorce.[2] Yet some couples lead exemplary lives, and there are women who bitterly lament the death or infidelity of their husbands. In their sorrow such women, or rather their spectres, are said to fly through the air and to be seen by others flitting aloft with streaming hair and arms bent behind their backs. Their flight is directed to waste parts of the island, where thick woods grow. There the phantom alights on a spray of palm or pandanus and chants her mournful strains, while the real woman sits weeping on the shore.[3]

Polygamy. Polygamy is a privilege of noble families, because only noblemen are able to support several wives. The first wife is the real mistress of the household, the others occupy an inferior position, and are bound to stay at home during the day, minding the house and the chief's children. They are jealously guarded and may only quit the hut in company with the chief or with an old woman appointed by him. In the old days these subordinate wives led such retired lives that they were hardly seen at all by ordinary people ; they slept in a special apartment of the house.[4]

Incest. There are some isolated families in the Marshall Islands in which incest between brothers and sisters is freely permitted, and the same privilege is accorded to chiefs.[5]

Reported infanticide. It has been reported that in the Marshall Islands every mother was allowed to bring up only three children, and that she was obliged to bury alive, with her own hands, her fourth and every succeeding child. This rigorous law, however, is said to have applied only to commoners ; the families of noblemen were exempt from it.[6] However, the report of this barbarous institution is not confirmed by Father Erdland, our best authority on the islands ; for he tells us that a law commanding the destruction of every third child was unknown to the oldest islanders whom he questioned.[7]

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 119, 142.
[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 120.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 120 *sq.*
[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 121 *sq.*
[5] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 266 note 1.
[6] O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea*, iii. 173 ; A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 235.
[7] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 127.

Seclusion of chief's daughter at puberty.

A chief's daughter at puberty used to be secluded for two or three weeks in a special hut not far from the shore of the lagoon. One half of the hut was reserved for her, and the other half was occupied by a sorceress and female attendants. During the day the girl was bound to sit in the hut resting on her heels, with her legs close together; she might not crook them under her nor stretch them out. The sorceress anointed her daily with palm oil, and after the anointment the girl bathed in the sea, going and returning by a special path called the Maiden's Path, which no commoner was allowed to tread. She might not eat any fish caught by net and weir on the outer reef; and bonitos and certain other kinds of fish were forbidden foods to her. During her seclusion, men and women on the island might only stir thrice a day even for the most necessary purposes, and like the chief's daughter they had to bathe thrice a day and apply a fragrant unguent to their persons.[1]

Seclusion of women at menstruation.

Menstruous women passed the time in a small hut erected near the house. They were forbidden to eat food cooked in the family kitchen. They subsisted largely on raw victuals, such as pandanus and coco-nuts, but they were allowed to cook for themselves some foods, such as bread-fruit, fish, and arrowroot on a small fire of their own. However, in doing so they had to take care that their sons should not see the smoke of the fire, else their eyes would be blinded in war. Women in that state must refrain from eating fish caught with net and weir on the outer reef, such as bonitos and swordfish, and they might not walk on the beach where fish appear in shoals.[2]

§ 3. *The Religion of the Islanders*

Little known of the religion.

We pass now to a consideration of the religious beliefs and practices of the Marshall Islanders. Unfortunately our information on the subject is very scanty. The early voyagers to the islands had neither the leisure nor the knowledge of the language necessary for the investigation of these difficult and delicate problems. The American missionaries,

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 133-135. [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 135.

who have been settled for more than half a century in the islands, possessed ample time and means to acquaint themselves with the religion which they came to supplant, but they appear to have totally neglected their opportunities, or at least to have suppressed any information which they acquired. It was reserved for a Catholic missionary, Father Erdland, late in the day, when the ancient faith and worship had long fallen into decay, to gather up some fragmentary accounts of these important sides of the native life before the memory of them had entirely faded from the minds of the people. In what follows I shall base my very imperfect exposition of the religion mainly on the evidence supplied by Father Erdland.

Chamisso's account of the religion.

But for the sake of completeness it may be well to begin by quoting the account of the religion of the Marshall Islanders given by the poet Chamisso, who spent some time in the islands in the years 1816 and 1817 as one of the naturalists of the Russian exploring expedition under the command of Otto von Kotzebue. He writes:

The god in heaven.

"The inhabitants of Radack adore an invisible God, in heaven, and offer him a simple tribute of fruits, without temples and without priests. In their language *Iageach* signifies god: the name of the god is *Anis*. When war or any other important affair is to be undertaken, solemn offerings are made, always in the open air. One of the assembly, not the chief, consecrates the fruits to the god, by holding them up, and invocation; the form is *Gidien Anis mne jeo*, the assembled people repeat the last word. When the father of a family goes out on the fishery, or undertakes anything important, he offers among his family. There are, on several islands, holy trees, coco-palms, into the crown of which *Anis* descends. Round the foot of such a tree four beams are laid in a square. There does not appear to be any prohibition to enter the space enclosed, and the fruits of the tree are eaten by the people.

Superstitions about tattooing.

"The operation of tattooing is associated in Radack with religious ideas, and cannot be undertaken without certain divine tokens. The persons who desire to be tattooed pass the night in a house, on which the chief, who is to perform the operation, invokes the god; an audible

tone, or whistle, is said to make known his consent. If the token does not appear, the operation is not performed. Hence some persons never undergo it. If they were to transgress in this respect, the sea would inundate the island, and all the land be destroyed. The danger which threatens all low islands from the sea is well known, and religious faith often suspends this rod over man. Against this, however, conjurations prevail. Kadu[1] saw the sea rising at Radack, as far as the feet of the coco-trees, but it was conjured in time, and retired within its own limits. He named to us two men and one woman, at Radack, who understood this conjuration.

The blind god of Bygar.

"The desert island-group of Bygar[2] has its peculiar god. The god of Bygar is blind, he has two young sons, of the name of Rigabuil, and the people who visit Bygar call each other, as long as they stay there, Rigabuil, that the blind god may take them for his sons, and do good to them. *Anis* must not be called upon in Bygar, the god would punish the culprit with severe illness and death. Under a tree, in Bygar, offerings of fruits, coco-nuts, etc. are brought. Certain forms of conjuration are efficacious and infallible to make the water come into the pits[3]; if the result is unfavourable, something has been forgotten, and the words were not said right. It is everywhere as with us. At Bygar the sharks are not allowed to do any harm to man: the god will not suffer it. The inhabitants of all the groups of Radack visit Bygar by way of Udirick, only those of Eilu are not permitted to do it directly. They must remain a month at Udirick before they sail there, and on their return must spend another month in the same group before they partake of the provisions brought with them. This provision consists in the flesh of birds and turtles, which they first bake, and then dry in the sun. The use of salt is unknown at Radack.

"The marriages, the funerals, the feasts upon several

[1] This Kadu was a native of the island-group of Ulea, who supplied the Russian explorers with much information on the manners and customs of the Marshall Islanders. Chamisso paints his portrait in the most favourable colours. See O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea*, iii. 97 *sqq.*; A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 156 *sqq.*

[2] Now generally known as Bikar.

[3] Probably the reference is to watering the beds of taro.—J. G. F.

occasions seem to have no reference to religion. We were not happy enough to come to an understanding with Kadu respecting an existence after death." [1]

The reported god Anis.

Such is the account which Chamisso gives of the religion of the Marshall Islanders. It seems probable that Anis, which he mentions as the proper name of the god of Radak, is rather a general name for spirit or demon; according to Father Erdland, the word *anij* applies to evil spectres or phantoms which do harm to man, or at all events inspire him with terror; in a wider sense the word designates all terrible beings, such as sea monsters and poisonous fish.[2] It is perhaps impossible now to verify the curious account which Chamisso gives of the blind god of Bygar (Bikar).

§ 4. *The Fear of the Dead and the Doctrine of the Soul*

Fear of the spirits of the dead.

The surmise that the *Anis* of Chamisso is no more than a general name for spirit, perhaps in particular for the dreaded spirits of the departed, is confirmed by the evidence which the American ethnologist Horatio Hale gives as to the religion of the natives of Mille or the Mulgrave Islands, which form part of the Marshall archipelago. He writes:

"Their only worship consists in invocations to the *Anit*, said by Lay [3] to be the name of their supreme divinity; but it seems likely that it is only the general term for *spirit*. Thus Lay tells us in his narrative that the natives will not take the fruit of the coco-nut tree which has been planted near a grave, 'for fear of displeasing their god (*anit*).' But Mr. Paulding says (p. 136):[4] 'I was walking, back of the huts, over a level green spot, enclosed by coco-nut trees, when Lugoma came to me in great haste, and with a disturbed look beckoned me to come away, at the same time

[1] O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea*, iii. 167-169; A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 229-231. I have slightly altered the English version in a few passages to bring it into closer accord with the German original.

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 313.

[3] Lay and Hussey were American seamen who spent some time with the natives on Mille or the Mulgrave group. See H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 87.

[4] *Journal of the Cruise of the United States schooner Dolphin among the Islands of the Pacific*, by Lieutenant Hiram Paulding (New York, 1831). This work is cited by H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 88. I have not seen it.

saying to Hussey that I must not go there; it was a place for the dead; my presence would disturb them, and bring spirits round the huts.' And again (p. 175): 'If one of them has wronged another who has died, he never eats without throwing away a portion of his food to appease the ghost of the departed.' When a person dies, the body is enclosed in mats and buried, after which, says Mr. Paulding, 'a little canoe with a sail to it, and laden with small pieces of coco-nut or other food, is taken to the seashore, or the leeward part of the island, and sent off, with a fair wind, to bear far away from the island the spirit of the deceased, that it may not afterwards disturb the living.' . . . After the ceremony of interment is completed, two coco-nut trees are planted, one at the head and the other at the foot of the grave. The fruit of these is never eaten by the women, and not by the men until a considerable time has elapsed after the burial."[1]

These facts seem clearly to prove that the Marshall Islanders believe in the survival of the human soul after death and in the power of the disembodied spirit to injure the living. Hence the attempts to propitiate the ghost and to send it far away to sea, lest it should return and haunt the living.

Native idea of the soul.

Father Erdland tells us that it is extremely difficult to grasp the conception which the natives have formed of the soul. They have no idea of its being immaterial, and they express its quality by a comparison with water, which it resembles in its mobility and transparency. In conformity with this conception they say that demons seek to cause death in a man's body by diving after the vital principle, while the soul rises and sinks, like waves on the sea.[2] Thus the soul seems to be thought of as a limpid substance or being, hidden away in some inward part of the body. Yet it is not regarded as absolutely essential to life, since, in the opinion of the natives, it can be absent from the body without causing the death, or at all events the permanent death, of the person.[3] This belief in the possibility of the temporary absence of the soul from the body comes out

Temporary absence of the soul.

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 89. [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 142 *sq.*
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 322.

clearly in a story which the natives tell of a rivalry between two men for the love of a chief's daughter. When she had reached a marriageable age, her father sent out messengers in canoes to the neighbouring islands to say that such chiefs as desired to woo the damsel should come, bearing presents and likewise bread-fruit and the drupes of pandanus on poles, in order that the maiden might choose her husband from among them. So they came in their canoes and landed in the island. Now one of them, by name Leoirok, was very handsome, and when the maiden saw him she loved him, and told her father that she wished to sail away with Leoirok in his canoe and be his wife. Her father gave his consent, and the maiden made ready to depart with her lover. But just as they were about to put to sea, one of the rival wooers, by name Lajbuineamuen, stretched forth his hand and grasped the maiden's soul, and hid it. But the others knew nothing of what had happened. So Leoirok sailed away with the maiden, his bride. But when they came to his island the maiden died, because the rival lover had stolen her soul. So her husband covered her up, launched his canoe, laid her body in it, and sailed away to seek for her lost soul. To island after island he came and sought for her soul, but found it not. At last he came to the island of his rival, the island of Lajbuineamuen, who had stolen the damsel's soul. There he landed, and as he did so, the maiden's soul came and embarked in the canoe. But he himself went ashore and remonstrated with his rival, with Lajbuineamuen, saying, "Wherefore hast thou robbed the chief's daughter of her soul? Wast thou not afraid to do so?" And his rival answered him and said, "Throw at the lilies on the grave!" And he threw at the lilies on the grave, and many women appeared, but his dead love was not among them. And his rival spoke again, saying, "Throw at the bush that grows on the grave!" So he threw at the bush that grew on the grave, and many women appeared, but his dead love was not among them. Then he turned round the bowl of tortoise-shell, and lo! his dead wife came to life in the canoe.[1]

Again, we have seen that women, in mourning for the

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 208 *sq.*

Absent souls of mourning women.

death or infidelity of their husbands, are believed to fly away through the air and alight on the boughs of trees in some lonely spot, where they sing a mournful ditty.[1] But these flying creatures, whom the natives fancy they can descry fluttering aloft, appear to be no more than the souls of the women, for all the time the bodies of the women are seen to sit weeping and wailing on the shore.[2]

§ 5. *The Fate of the Soul after Death*

Soul abides with the body in the grave for six days.

The natives believe that for six days after burial the soul abides with the body in the grave before setting out for its long home.[3] For six is the sacred number of the Marshall Islanders. The reason is curious. On the barrier reef which girds these coral islands the billows regularly break in a succession of three great rollers followed by six smaller waves, and the natives avail themselves of the interval of the six small waves between the great rollers to run their canoes out or in through the surf, before they can be overwhelmed by the mountainous waves that follow.[4] Hence six is with them the lucky number.

Journey of the soul to the island of ghosts.

After six days the soul of the dead person becomes conscious of what has happened and immediately sets out on its wanderings. First it comes to the island of Narikrik, which is one of the islands in the Mille atoll. There its arrival is announced to the inhabitants by a rustling sound. Next morning they find a piece of tortoise-shell under a shrub of a particular sort which is regarded as a panacea for all possible diseases. When they find the tortoise-shell, they know that it is part of the necklace worn by the soul on its wanderings. Next the soul must pass over the southern reef, where the spirit Lorok dwells, and take its way northwards. If it succeeds in passing the abode of the malignant spirit Lajbuineamuen, it makes its way westward to Eorerok, the Island of the Dead. To this haven of departed souls it comes in the form of a canoe under sail. There it must undergo an examination at the hands of the inhabitants of the island. The all-important question is

The last judgment.

[1] Above, p. 79.
[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 322.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 322 *sq.*
[4] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 5 *sq.*, 323.

whether the soul is a great or a little canoe, for on the answer to that question depends the fate of the soul. If the soul appears at the ghostly island in the form of a large canoe, its continuous existence is assured; it will be a living spirit, and passing over the low stone wall which encircles the island, it will continue to live there, supporting existence on a diet of crab's spawn. On the other hand, if the soul presents itself at the island in the guise of a small canoe, its doom is sealed; it may stay the pangs of hunger for a time on a species of water polyp called holothures, but sooner or later it perishes utterly. There is no question of punishment inflicted in the other life for sins committed in this one. The only sin which the natives appear to recognize is adultery committed by a commoner with a chief's wife; but that sin the chief takes care to punish in this life, so that when the sinner arrives in the other world he has no score to pay, his slate is clean. Immortality, or at all events a prolonged life after death, is not a reward of virtue; it depends simply and solely on the question whether the soul of the dead can put in an appearance at the bar of judgment in the likeness of a big or a little canoe.[1] In this form the last judgment has the advantage of extreme simplicity; it is not complicated by any nice question as to the moral excellence or deficiency of the prisoner at the bar.

Return of the ghosts.

But the fate of the soul in the other world has a very important bearing on the fortunes of the survivors in this one. For whereas souls which present themselves to the judge in the form of small canoes receive their final quietus and never appear again to the living, souls which at the island of ghosts took the shape of big canoes have the power of appearing as ghosts or phantoms to the survivors and of doing them good or evil. Hence they are both feared and honoured as the guardian spirits of families. Yet fear seems to be the predominant motive of their worship, which accordingly assumes on the whole the character of rites intended to avert and appease the wrath of these dangerous beings.[2]

The spirits usually appear by night and are seen in

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 323 *sq.*
[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 323 *sq.*, 327.

Spirits appear in dreams.

human form by sleepers. The sight is so alarming that often the sleeper can neither stir nor cry out. From fear of such phantoms no native will sleep alone in a hut, or go by himself to the outer shore or to any solitary place, where he might be surprised and attacked by a ghost.[1]

Famous ghosts.

Some souls of the dead have even attained a great notoriety for their uncanny doings in the land of the living. For example, a lady named Limokein, a near relative of a well-known chief Kabua, died in childbed without bringing her infant into the world. They wrapped the body as usual in mats and tied it up; but as they were doing so, the cord snapped at the level of the mouth. This was an ill omen, and divination by means of pandanus leaves was resorted to in order to discover what should be done to avert the threatened evil. The first response was that the corpse must not be buried on land, else all the islanders would be devoured by the woman's ghost. The second divination disclosed the melancholy fact that to sink the corpse in the sea within the limits where the bonitos swim would be disastrous. Even the third and last divination was far from being satisfactory. Still there was no help for it, and the natives had to commit the body to the sea far out on the edge of the horizon. So they took it there and heaved it overboard. But though it was weighted with three stones at the head and the foot, it would not sink. Not until incantations had been uttered did it slowly disappear under water, after describing six circles on the surface. The weather was stormy; it blew a hurricane. While the canoe was still far from land, the body, or rather the ghost, of the lady was seen by the inhabitants of the spirit island hanging on a tree. Six days later she appeared to the survivors, rising out of the sea not far from the reef. But hardly had her father called out, "See, there she is; how wonderful!" when she vanished away. That very night she pulled all the islanders by their limbs, and next morning they saw her bathing in a pool. When they asked her what she did there, she made no reply, but turned herself into a stone, which was washed away by a tidal wave in the seventies of the nineteenth century. In spite of that

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 127.

she continues to play her pranks, and down to some ten years ago she was in high favour with the head chief Kabua, whom she helped in sickness and in laying enchantments on unruly subjects. A strong curse in the mouth of a native when he is in a rage with somebody is, "May Limokein (that is, the lady's ghost) batten on your belly!"[1]

Again, the ghost of a certain man Kaibuki appeared one day to an under chief, now deceased, named Nelu, who was so terrified by the sight that he bolted and never stopped running till he dropped down from sheer exhaustion, and fell into a fever.[2]

Sacrifices to the spirits of the dead.

With these examples before us, we can easily understand why sacrifices are offered to the spirits of the dead. The sacrifice consists of food placed on the grave or thrown on a particular side of the hut where the living may not set foot. If the grave of the deceased happens to be in the island, the food is tied to a pole which is planted on the grave. But if the grave is not on the island, or the body has been sunk in the sea, then before partaking of a meal the family throws a morsel of food at the sacred side of the hut, saying, "Food for So-and-so! I cast it there!" Such morsels offered to the souls of the dead are never touched by the living; they are left to be consumed by rats, crabs, and beetles.[3]

Evocation of the souls of the dead.

Sometimes the souls of the departed are summoned up to warn or advise the living. In former years such consultations appear to have been common enough; at present they are less frequent, but have not wholly fallen into desuetude. Some years ago a schooner which Father Erdland had chartered, and which should have arrived in a fortnight, was overdue at the end of a month. Being anxious about its safety, the native owner of the vessel applied to a witch with a request that she would enquire of her familiar spirits. So the witch, according to her custom, retired at evening to a solitary hut, and there chanted diverse songs, by which she professed to summon the particular spirit whom she desired to consult. She put her questions to him, and next morning she assured the owner

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 327 *sq.* [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 328.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 329.

of the schooner that he might be quite easy in his mind, for the vessel was homeward bound but delayed by contrary winds. Sure enough the ship put into harbour a few days later, and when they questioned the skipper, they found that on the very night when the witch had been closeted with the ghost the ship had been a hundred and eighty miles from land, battling with a head wind.[1] This crucial case ought surely to lay to rest the doubts of the most hardened sceptic as to the perfect accuracy of the information possessed and imparted by Marshall Islands ghosts.

Ghosts throw stones.

The ghosts are also in the habit of making their presence known by throwing stones on the thatched roofs of houses. But as the living natives also indulge in this practice for the purpose of attracting the attention of sleepers, it is not always possible to discriminate with absolute certainty between stones thrown by ghosts and those cast by ordinary mortals.[2] From this it follows that the argument for the immortality of the soul which can be drawn from the ghostly custom of stone-throwing is open, in the Marshall Islands, to a certain amount of dubiety. Still, even with this limitation, the argument is probably as good as many others that have been adduced in support of that popular dogma.

§ 6. *Rites of Burial and Mourning*

Burial of a chief.

The ceremonies observed at the burial of a chief are as follows. Immediately after the death the body is subjected to a treatment intended to preserve it for at least two days from corruption. For this purpose it is eviscerated and the openings of the body plugged up. The head and face are covered with flowers and wreaths. A bandoleer, decorated with red shells, is laid crosswise over the breast. The laments last two days and two nights ; incantations are pronounced, and the songs which the deceased loved in life are sung once more. On the morning of the third day the body is borne to the place of burial and set down beside the grave, about which the masters of ceremonies have strewed flowers and fragrant essences beforehand. A dance is then performed in honour of the dead chief. On its

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 330. [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 330.

conclusion the face of the corpse is covered with a small mat, and the whole body swathed in two mats. Six times the masters of ceremonies carry the body round the grave; and at the end of every round the magician calls out the number of the round. When the last round is over, the corpse is laid in the grave with the head to the north. This position is necessary to prevent the mischievous spirit Lajbuineamuen, who dwells in the north, from doing harm to the dead man's soul. As soon as the body is deposited in the grave, a relative of the deceased calls out, "Bring him an escort!" If the kinsfolk do not succeed in pacifying the man who makes this demand, an adult person is at once killed and laid close beside the dead chief. But if the relative who has called for an escort suffers himself to be pacified, a great canoe is shattered and the pieces deposited in the grave. Afterwards the masters of the ceremonies fill up the grave with stones and a top layer of sand.[1]

Hair of mourners cut off.

The relations and subjects of the chief cut off their hair and mourn for six days and nights on the tomb. A bunch of palm leaves hung up on the shore of the lagoon indicates that no man may set foot on the place of burial. Henceforth women are forbidden to pass the side of the grave next to the lagoon for fear of angering the dead chief; even canoes must make a wide circuit to avoid passing near the grave, otherwise the ghost would conjure up a tidal wave. The hut in which the chief died is also abandoned and suffered to fall into decay; nobody will enter it again. The avoidance is no doubt dictated by a fear of encountering the ghost of the chief in his old home.[2]

House abandoned.

Rules observed during mourning.

During the six days of mourning not the smallest noise may be made in the neighbourhood of the grave. Hence it is forbidden to pluck coco-nuts and bread-fruit and to beat pandanus leaves for the making of mats. If a commoner dies in the meantime, he must be buried far from the grave of the chief, or the corpse must, in accordance with what was formerly the universal custom, be sunk in the sea. No water may be drawn from the water-holes, and no fishing carried on within the lagoon. The grave-diggers must abstain from intercourse with their wives, and

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 324 *sq.* [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 325.

may not even show themselves on the shore of the lagoon. Any transgression of this rule would compel the heavenly spirits Lewoj and Lanej to devour the soul of the transgressor.[1]

Burial of commoners.

Commoners are interred in silence, without song or lament. Formerly they, like the chiefs, were buried at sea, with this difference, that whereas chiefs were sunk with stones in the water, the bodies of commoners were simply thrown overboard and left to drift and welter on the waves. Once rid of its melancholy burden, the canoe paddled away, none of its occupants daring to look behind at the place where they had shot the remains of their comrade into the sea. Nowadays all the dead are buried on land in a piece of ground belonging to the family, not far from the shore. Before the introduction of Christianity burial on land was a privilege reserved for nobles, to enable their subjects to mourn on their graves.[2]

§ 7. *The Doctrine of Spirits*

Spirits of the dead in stones, trees, fish, and birds.

Some of the spirits of the dead are believed to take up their abode in stones, trees, fish, or birds. Such ghostly fish and fowl live on or near the atolls, and their presence places a certain degree of restraint on the activities of living men, whether it be by the prohibition to set foot on an island that is haunted by a spirit, or by the rule that certain words may not be spoken, or in a variety of other ways. The general name for these transfigured and dreaded spirits is *akejab.* But the name is not confined to them ; it includes spirits of a higher order, who are not supposed ever to have been men in the flesh. Among these higher spirits are Wulleb, Lejman, Lajbuineamuen, Irojirilik, Lorok, Lewoj, and Lanej.[3]

Higher spirits.

Spirits appear in human form.

However, all these spirits, whether pure or transfigured, are conceived without exception in the semblance and fashion of men. As men they appear in dreams, especially to medicine-men and magicians. The only advantage which the higher spirits have over the inferior spirits, who once

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 325 *sq.* [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 326.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 312.

were men, is that they have at their command the evil spirits, the so-called *anjilik*, whom they send forth to cause sickness and to steal men's souls out of their bodies.[1] When these evil spirits, at the command of Wulleb, enter into a man's body, they are seen sailing to their victim in a canoe. To cast the devils out of the sick man, the magician kindles a fire, folds a dry pandanus leaf in the shape of a canoe, and puts it in the sea, saying, "Stand up! Arise! Oh, drag him away! drag him westward away to Eb!" If the great spirit Wulleb hears the prayer, the sick man sees the evil spirit sailing away; otherwise it will soon be all over with him, since the devil has hurried away with the patient's soul.[2]

Casting out devils.

In contrast to these malignant spirits, who do evil to men and frighten them, are the woodland spirits, called *anjinmar* or *nonieb*. These are good-natured and indeed simple little creatures, male and female, who reside in thickets or rank grass. You may hear them talking and laughing close at hand, but you can never get speech of them. Often they marry mortal women, and bless them with many wonderful gifts, including children. For example, once upon a time there lived a woman all alone on the island of Abeju, which is part of the Ujae atoll. One morning a woodland spirit appeared to her, but only to vanish immediately. In the course of the day she saw him again, and at evening he slipped into her hut. He caught the most savoury fishes for her, and loaded her with the same perfumes which exhaled from his body. By this woodland spirit, whose name was Lekennat, which is also the name of a bush that grows commonly in the islands, the woman had a son called Lajabenke, which is also the name of a kind of fish. Their happy wedded life lasted several years, till at last the woman disclosed the secret to her curious and envious neighbours, after which her little husband vanished and she saw him no more.[3]

Woodland spirits.

Eb is the name of the island where Wulleb lives, who is the most powerful of all the spirits. Where exactly the island lies nobody knows; all that is certain is that it is

Eb, the island of the spirit Wulleb.

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 312 *sq.* [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 314.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 314.

situated somewhere away in the west. The proof of that is that every year the migratory birds take their flight westward either to nest in the island or to moult there. The spirits who live in Eb are very glad when the birds moult on the island, for it saves them the trouble of plucking the fowls for their feathers. Also the great shoals of fish swim every year westward at the spawning-time to pay their tribute to Wulleb in the west. Perhaps the island of Eb is no other than Yap, one of the best known of the Caroline Islands. In the language of the Marshall Islanders there is no sound corresponding to the English Y, so that in their speech the name of Yap might perhaps be corrupted into Eb.[1]

§ 8. *Public Festivals*

Festival of pandanus fruit.

As the fruit of the pandanus or screw-pine is the article of food on which the Marshall Islanders depend chiefly for their subsistence, it is not surprising that they should periodically celebrate a solemn festival in connexion with the fruit, for the purpose of ensuring an ample supply of food in the islands. The time of the festival is fixed by the chief. Each atoll appears to celebrate its own festival. On the day appointed all the men of the atoll assemble at one end of an island, where they collect all kinds of raw food to be dressed by them on a fire. There a bunch of palm-fronds, tied up in the shape of a bird, is laid on the ground, with the point of the bunch turned to the east. The master of the ceremonies pronounces an incantation over this effigy of a bird to the following effect: "This is the bird which the spirits of Eb have sent eastward to partake of the food of the atoll. It has flown to Biginni, it circles there, it beholds there, it seeks there, it finds naught there. It flies farther to Wotto, it circles there, it beholds there, it seeks there, it finds naught. Ailininae, it circles there, it beholds there, it seeks there, it finds naught there. It flies farther to Ujae, it circles there, it beholds there, it seeks there, there it finds something." After these words the magician smites the effigy of the bird with the branch of a particular sort of bush. Then he

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 315.

pierces a pandanus fruit with a pointed stick and carries it westward, marching with solemn steps and saying: "Pandanus of the God in the West, Lawulleb, take it westward, take it westward, lay it there outside before the hut of Lawulleb." In like manner he bears the fruit in turn eastward to Lokomran, southwards to Lorok, and northwards to Lajbuineamuen. Then he calls out: "Plashing rain is falling: weather for coco-nut palms, the pattering rain is falling: weather for pandanus, showers are coming: weather for bread-fruit," and so on. After that he throws the pandanus to the east, crying, "At the snipe on the open ground, cast it there." Thereupon he tears off the fruit of the pandanus which is intended for the sea, and flings it into the ocean, in order that many shoals of fish may thus be drawn into the lagoon. Then he takes another fruit of the pandanus called "the pandanus for growth," and buries it in the ground, after speaking these words: "Pandanus for growth, cast it thither, that they may take it and bury it, to the end that the ground of this island may be fruitful."[1] The fruit offered to the gods.

After that men are chosen by divination to tend the fire and the place of sacrifice. The place of sacrifice is not far from the outer beach, in any open spot or under a tree; during the continuance of the festival no uninitiated person may set foot on the holy ground. But by divination men are chosen who can enter the holy place without defiling it. There they dress various kinds of food on a great stone hearth, and also certain special foods on a small fire. Of these latter foods no woman may partake, and from them the chosen men extract certain uneatable portions which they place in a pandanus leaf folded in the shape of a canoe and called Wulleb's canoe. This mimic canoe, with its uneatable victuals, is then launched on the sea and allowed to drift westward, no doubt that it may find its way to Eb, the island of Wulleb, who, as a god, may be supposed capable of masticating food which would defy the teeth of mere mortals.[2] Cooking the food. Food sent to Wulleb.

After two days the men who had been engaged in superintending the fire and the cooking, return from the

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 316-318. [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 318.

place of sacrifice, shrieking, "The spirit is wheeling from the outer beach into the interior." They bring food with them, of which the women receive a string of fish and some raw bread-fruit.

Towards the end of the festival all the men betake themselves to the magician's hut. There a fire is burning not far from the sleeping-place. On one side of the hut the women deck themselves with all sorts of ornaments.

The witch's spell.

As soon as they have finished their toilet, the old witch in the hut screams out certain unintelligible, or at least untranslated, words, repeating them six times over, until, after the sixth repetition, all the women rush into the hut, staring with wide-opened eyes at the men. There in the hut, the old witch, wound up to the highest pitch of excitement, kicks about a pandanus fruit, which for the nonce is regarded as a human being. As she does so, she cries: "Tide and waves are setting eastwards: knock and pelt the varlet; pelt the varlet and knock him: outer reef in the north, outer reef in the south, reef for the catching of flying fish. Cast him out there before Wulleb's hut, that Wulleb may thrust away and send bonitos and other fish in shoals hither, in order that he may make them draw near to the shore of the Knowing Ones, who thereby are excluded from intercourse[1]: drag him away, drag him away, drag him away to Eb."[2]

The festival ends with a banquet, at which women are allowed to partake of raw pandanus fruit, which at all other times of the year is forbidden to them. The purpose of the festival, we are told, is to ensure that the atolls should have plenty of food, that abundant rain may fall, that many fish and birds may come, and that no tidal wave may devastate or destroy the island.[3]

Purpose of the festival.

Bread-fruit festival.

The natives also celebrate a bread-fruit festival, for bread-fruit is one of their staple foods. At this ceremony the magician holds up a bread-fruit and pronounces some words referring to the bread-fruits ripening according to the seasons

[1] This may perhaps refer to a rule of continence observed by fishermen before or during the fishing. Such a rule is strictly observed in some of the Caroline Islands (see below, pp. 159 *sq.*) and is not uncommon in primitive society. See *The Golden Bough*, Part II., *Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, pp. 190 *sqq.*

[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 318 *sq.*

[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 319.

of the year and ever multiplying in number. The first-fruits of the season are first allotted to the chiefs, common people get their share afterwards, and lastly some of the fruit is steeped in salt water and preserved. At the end of the ceremony the magician gets the thickest bread-fruit for himself; the rest are eaten at a common meal.[1]

§ 9. *Private Worship, Magical Rites*

These festivals form part of the public worship in which the whole body of the people engage. But individuals also pay their devotions to the spirits privately, as occasion offers. Thus, for example, offerings are made to Wulleb's train of evil spirits. When any one falls ill, and the sickness is ascribed to the machinations of these malignant beings, a whole litany of incantations is recited to ban them. The spell which is employed to heal a sick woman runs thus: "Lawulleb, take thyself off straightway from this woman; I make her inviolable; I hang an amulet about her neck." The amulet consists of a cord on which the fruits of a certain shrub, young palm-shoots, and bark of the *Triumfetta procumbens* are strung together. No evil spirit would dare to attack a person who wears such a necklace.[2]

Guarding the sick against evil spirits.

We have seen that the natives have recourse to magical rites in order to avert a tidal wave which threatens to engulf them.[3] At the first sign of the approaching cataclysm six poles are planted in the ground not far from the beach, at intervals of about six feet, so as to form a hexagon. At the height of three feet the poles are connected with each other by a string, except on the side towards the sea, which serves as an entrance to the enchanted ground. The tops of the poles are adorned with young palm-shoots, and the string which joins the poles is also decorated with a sort of festoon. In front of the entrance to the magical enclosure the paddle of a canoe is planted in the ground, with leaves knotted about it. No sooner is the great wave seen to roll in shoreward than the magician begins his enchantments in presence of the anxious multitude. He takes his stand within the

Magical rites to avert a tidal wave.

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* pp. 319 *sq.* [2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 320.
[3] Above, p. 65.

magic precinct with the paddle in his hand, as if he would charge down with it on the foe. Now he trips forwards and backwards in the greatest excitement, with staring eyes. As he advances, he recites his spells in tones so fierce and loud that it is enough to chill the hearer's blood; as he retreats, he assumes an ironic smiling demeanour and utters repeatedly the monosyllable *hi*.[1] How far these proceedings are successful in arresting the progress of a tidal wave we are not informed.

Magic to procure rain or fine weather.

The islanders also resort to magic for the purpose of procuring rain or fine weather. To make rain they enchant a bunch of palm-fronds and throw it into the sea. After six nights the palm-fronds have turned black, and as a natural consequence the sky grows black with rain-clouds. If the rain which follows is too heavy, the bunch of palm-fronds is taken out of the water, and as it dries on the shore, the weather turns to dry also.[2] The islanders think that if anybody points at a rainbow, the finger with which he points will become crooked.[3] A similar superstition occurs in Europe. Thus in Bohemia they say that if you point with your finger at a rainbow, the finger will rot and drop off.[4] The Marshall Islands belief seems to explain the origin of the superstition; as the rainbow itself is bowed or crooked, so, on the principle of sympathetic magic, the finger that points at it will become bowed or crooked also.

Magic and religion combined.

Thus the Marshall Islanders combine magical practices with a belief in the existence of the spirits of the dead and a desire to propitiate them. With them, as with many other peoples, savage and civilized, magic and religion go hand in hand.

[1] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 321.
[2] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 335.
[3] A. Erdland, *op. cit.* p. 340.
[4] J. V. Grohmann, *Aberglauben und Gebräuche aus Böhmen und Mähren* (Prague and Leipzig, 1864), p. 41; A. Wuttke, *Der deutsche Volksaberglaube der Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1869), p. 13. A similar superstition is reported in Silesia. See P. Drechsler, *Sitte, Brauch und Volksglaube in Schlesien* (Leipzig, 1906), ii. 139.

CHAPTER IV

THE CAROLINE ISLANDS

The Caroline Islands.

THE Caroline Islands form an extensive archipelago of small islands in the Western Pacific, stretching for over fifteen hundred miles from Yap in the west to Kusaie in the east; but if the Pelew Islands to the west be included within the Carolines, then the total length of the archipelago from west to east exceeds two thousand miles. All the islands lie to the north of the equator and within the tropics, between 139° and 170° of East longitude. The great majority of the islands are low coral atolls of the ordinary type, consisting of a coral reef enclosing a central lagoon and dotted at intervals with tiny islets, where the reef projects sufficiently above the level of the sea to permit of the accumulation of soil. These islets rarely rise more than twenty or thirty feet above the waves; necessarily they are destitute of running streams, and the inhabitants have to depend for fresh water on the rain, which collects in natural or artificial hollows in the coral rock. These pools serve the natives for the double purpose of drinking and bathing. But in addition to the multitude of atolls the archipelago includes a few high islands of mingled basaltic and limestone formation, which attain to an altitude varying from six hundred to nearly three thousand feet. Naturally these lofty islands present a striking contrast to the flat coral atolls which stud the sea for hundreds or thousands of miles in all directions. The voyager who catches sight of them after traversing a vast and wearisome extent of ocean, where there is nothing to break the monotony of sea and sky, experiences an

Aspect of the high islands from the sea.

indescribable sensation of pleasure and surprise at the aspect of these picturesque heights, mantled in the richest verdure from the edge of the water to the tops of the mountains, where thick clouds brood almost perpetually, nourishing the luxuriant vegetation which is characteristic of the islands. On a nearer approach the eye descries, in the verdant mantle, patches of a brighter green, where the hand of man has planted beds of sugar-cane and groves of bananas and bread-fruit, while clumps of majestic coco-nut palms, towering above the shore, mark the site of human habitations. Springs of fresh and limpid water gush from all the heights, and leaping from rock to rock form a series of picturesque cascades, sometimes uniting to feed a brook, the banks of which present the appearance of one unbroken garden wherever the nature of the soil is favourable to cultivation. Though these lofty islands are only five in number against some six or seven hundred flat islands, yet they embrace more than two-thirds of the total land area of the archipelago, so small and even minute are the others. The basaltic rocks, of which the high islands are in great measure composed, point to their volcanic origin; but there are no active volcanoes nor even extinct craters in the archipelago.[1]

The islanders a mixed race.

The population of the Caroline Islands has been described as an odd medley of the black, brown, and yellow races;[2] one of our best authorities on the islands, the Polish ethnographer J. S. Kubary, speaks of the racial mixture in the archipelago as chaotic.[3] The differences between the races which have here met and blended are manifested in the varieties of physical type, of language, and of customs which are found in different islands, and sometimes even in the same island. On the whole the westernmost islanders

[1] F. Lutké, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1835–1836), iii. 132 *sq.*; C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 343 *sqq.*; F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 546; F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 105 *sq.*; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 17 *sqq.* As to the lack of fresh water in the atolls, see F. J. Moss, *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea* (London, 1889), pp. 32, 34 *sq.*; M. Girschner, "Die Karolineninsel Namōluk und ihre Bewohner," *Baessler-Archiv*, ii. (1912) p. 130.

[2] F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 105.

[3] J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels* (Leyden, 1895), p. 114; compare *id.*, p. 87.

are much the darker and their language the more strange and barbarous; from which it has been inferred that the great stream of Polynesian migration from Asia must have flowed past these islands somewhere to the south. Yet the dialect of Uluthi, one of the extreme north-western islands of the archipelago, is said to exhibit a considerable infiltration of Polynesian;[1] while far away to the south, in the little coralline groups of Nukuor and Kap-in-Mailang, the language is a pure and archaic form of Polynesian, combining the Samoan and Maori dialects with a sprinkling of later Malayan;[2] indeed, we are informed by Kubary that the inhabitants of Nukuor are pure Polynesians.[3] In the high basaltic island of Ruk or Hogolu, which lies at about the middle of the Caroline archipelago, there are two distinct races, a dark people in the hills and a lighter reddish-brown people on the coast. Formerly the two peoples were constantly at war with each other, and the practice of head-hunting was carried on even under the Spanish dominion.[4]

Distinction between the inhabitants of the high and the low islands.

In respect of war a curious distinction was noted by an early voyager between the inhabitants of the high and of the low islands. He observed that whereas the natives of the high islands, with the exception of Ualan (Kusaie), were engaged in eternal wars with their neighbours, the natives of the low islands enjoyed the most perfect peace, occupying themselves with the cultivation of the soil, with industry, and with commerce, and seeming to entertain a natural distaste for fighting. Yet they were not ignorant of the existence of war in other islands; nay, they profited by it, for they manufactured and sold to their more bellicose neighbours the weapons with which these martial folk knocked each

[1] F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 105.

[2] F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 106; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 22. According to another and perhaps more accurate account, the language of Nukuor is simply old Samoan, and the natives are descendants of Samoans who had drifted thither at some time in the past. See M. Girschner, "Die Karolineninsel Namōluk und ihre Bewohner," *Baessler-Archiv*, ii. (1912) pp. 123, 182 note. This latter writer informs us (*l.c.*) that four different languages are spoken in the Eastern Carolines, to wit: (1) the Ponape language; (2) the Central Caroline language; (3) the Kusaie language; and (4) the Nukuor language (old Samoan).

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *Mittheilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in Hamburg*, *1878–79*, p. 9 (separate reprint).

[4] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 20 *sq.*; *id.*, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1889) p. 106.

other on the head. The finest spears and the best clubs were made by these pacific islanders, who, for all their simplicity, appear to have had a shrewd eye for business.[1]

Cantova's account of the islands.

The first attempt at a systematic account of the Caroline Islanders was made by the Jesuit Father Jean Antoine Cantova in the year 1722; but his report, published in the Catholic missionary collection of *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses*, was written before he had visited the islands, being compiled from the mouths of islanders who had drifted in their canoes to the Marianne Islands, where Father Cantova was then stationed.[2] The general accuracy of his account has been confirmed by subsequent enquiry, but from the nature of the case it was necessarily somewhat slight and superficial. To this day our knowledge of the Caroline Islanders, if we except the inhabitants of a few islands or groups of islands, is exceedingly imperfect. I shall not, therefore, attempt to describe the social and religious institutions and beliefs of the Caroline Islanders in general; for, quite apart from the extreme imperfection of the record, any general description would, by reason of the great diversity in the customs of the people, be liable to so many exceptions that it could be of little value. Accordingly in what I have to say on the subject I shall confine myself to the consideration of a few islands about which we happen to possess fuller information. The islands with which I propose to deal are the Mortlock Islands in the south, Ponape in the east, and Yap in the west of the archipelago. We begin with the Mortlock Islands.

[1] F. Lutké, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1835–1836), iii. 144.

[2] J. A. Cantova, in *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses*, Nouvelle Édition, xv. (Paris, 1781) pp. 282-320.

CHAPTER V

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AMONG THE MORTLOCK ISLANDERS

§ 1. *The Mortlock Islands*

The Mortlock Islands.

THE Mortlock Islands form part of the Caroline archipelago, lying on its southern margin and nearer to its eastern than to its western extremity. They consist of a group of three atolls, Satoan, Lukunor, and Etal, each of which includes a number of low coralline islets rising from the reef that encloses the central lagoon. With these may be reckoned a fourth atoll, called Namoluk, situated some thirty nautical miles to the north-west of the other group. In its turn Namoluk comprises five islands dotted at intervals along the reef which encloses the lagoon: the names of the principal islands are Namoluk, Amos, and Toinom. Only the two former are inhabited; but the others are cultivated and occasionally visited. The total population of the Namoluk atoll some twelve years ago was little more than two hundred, of which the majority were women. Our principal authority on the Mortlock Islands proper is the Polish ethnologist J. S. Kubary, who spent three months in them in the year 1887; our principal authority on Namoluk is a German medical man, Max Girschner, who lived for nearly nine years as a doctor and an official in the Eastern Carolines.[1] In what follows I shall base my account of the

[1] J. [S.] Kubary, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *Mittheilungen der Geographischen Gesellschaft in Hamburg, 1878–79* (separate reprint); Max Girschner, "Die Karolineninsel Namōluk und ihre Bewohner," *Baessler-Archiv*, ii. (1912) pp. 123-125, iii. (1913) pp. 165-190.

islanders and their religion on the information supplied by these writers.

§ 2. *The Mortlock Islanders and their Mode of Life*

Appearance of the islanders.

The Mortlock Islanders appear to be typical Micronesians, so far as we can speak of a racial type in a people who exhibit so many variations of physique. Their complexion varies from a dark to a light yellow-brown; their hair is almost always black, long, and straight, their build somewhat slender yet strong; the face is long, the forehead narrow, and the beard scanty, growing chiefly on the chin. In point of muscular strength the people are far inferior to the Polynesians. But while this is the prevailing type, there is another and much robuster type, with fuller body, broader face, and well-developed beard. This latter type, however, is exceptional in the Carolines and points to admixture with another race. The women in general have shorter, rounder, and broader faces than the men, lower foreheads, and more prominent chins.[1] The language exhibits an admixture of Samoan words, which may have been borrowed from Nukuor, where, as we have seen, a pure Polynesian language is spoken.[2]

Life of the natives.

The life of the natives on these low coral islands is said to be wretched. The uniformity of the surrounding nature, the heat that broods all day long on the burning coral sands, the plague of flies and mosquitoes, together with the scanty monotonous diet, would of themselves suffice to depress the spirits; but to all these causes of melancholy must be added the frequent lack of food and the dangers that perpetually threaten the islands from the waves and tides of the stormy ocean. Yet the native has his cheerful hours. At night, when the scorching heat of the day is over, when the moon diffuses her silvery light and a soft breeze blows from the sea, young and old sit on the beach, enjoying the refreshing coolness of the air, and passing the time in games and songs. Far and wide may be heard the clap of hands beating time to melancholy ditties and to cries that can scarcely be called

[1] J. [S.] Kubary, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *op. cit.* pp. 7-9.

[2] J. [S.] Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 9 *sq.* See above, p. 101.

melodious. The merriment, such as it is, reaches its height at the time when the bread-fruit is ripe and food in consequence is abundant. Then night after night the people dance to the light of fires fed with coco-nut leaves; then all cares and dangers are forgotten; Lukeilan, the great god of heaven, is believed to be then gracious to his people.[1]

Food. The food of the natives is neither varied nor always plentiful. Whereas taro and bread-fruit are in season only at certain times, coco-nuts ripen all the year round and furnish the people with their principal means of subsistence. The coco-nut palm is therefore an object of their special care and watchfulness; for nine months of the year they depend chiefly on its nuts for their food. They eat fish with taro and bread-fruit; hence they ply the fisheries especially at the time when the bread-fruit ripens; then there is food in plenty, but the natives are not far-seeing enough to lay up provisions for a time of scarcity, though they make an attempt to preserve some of the superfluous bread-fruit in hollows of the coral rock.[2]

Weaving. Among the industries of the Mortlock Islanders their weaving deserves a special mention; for unlike most of the Polynesians, who contented themselves with cloth made by beating the bark of trees with mallets, the Mortlock Islanders have been accustomed to weave cloths on a native loom (*tor*). The materials they employ are exclusively the fibres of the hibiscus. Of this cloth they make garments both for men and women. The man's garment is composed of two pieces sewn together with a slit in the middle for the head. It resembles a poncho and covers the whole body down to and below the knees. It is dyed with turmeric, and furnishes an excellent protection against the sun. The woman's garment consists simply of a cloth wound about the hips and not reaching below the knees. Unlike the garments of the men, those of the women are woven of threads of diverse colours so as to make a variety of patterns. The names of the garments vary with the patterns. The whole industry of cloth-making, from the preparation of the raw materials to

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 127. As to the hard conditions of life in the Mortlock Islands, compare J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 20.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 19 *sq.* As to the food, see further M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 139 *sqq.*

the weaving of the threads on the loom, is in the hands of the women.[1]

Ignorance of metals.

Like all the natives of the South Sea, the Mortlock Islanders were ignorant of the metals, and hence they were compelled to make their tools out of wood, stone, shell, and bone. Among their implements were fish-hooks made of tortoise-shell or the hard shell of the coco-nut; axes made of the shell of the giant clam (*Tridacna gigas*); and needles made of human bone or wood.[2]

Bows and arrows.

Among the weapons which they employed in war were bows and arrows. The arrows were tipped with the barb of the sting-ray or the pointed wing-bone of a bird. No quivers were employed. The warrior carried his arrows loose under his arm, and laid his spare arrows on the ground before him while he was shooting. It is said that no examples of these weapons are now extant. The discovery of their use appears to be due to Dr. Girschner, who informs us that similar weapons were formerly employed in Ponape, another of the Caroline Islands.[3] When we remember that the use of bows and arrows as weapons of war appears to have been quite unknown throughout the length and breadth of Polynesia, the discovery of their employment in war by some of the Micronesians becomes all the more remarkable.

The barb of the sting-ray.

Like other Micronesians and Polynesians, the Mortlock Islanders were in the habit of tipping some of their spears and daggers with the barbs of the sting-ray, and the wounds inflicted by these weapons were the most dreaded of all; for the barb usually remained in the wound, and the native surgeon feared to extract it on account of the excessive bleeding which would follow; so the patients generally succumbed to their hurts.[4]

Shell necklaces.

Among the ornaments worn by the natives the most prized are necklaces of red Spondylus shell. The most valuable of all are the large shells of a deep red colour. The gathering of these shells is not easy in Namoluk and the Mortlock Islands, for the creature which inhabits the shell lives there in deep water. Hence to procure them the

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 13 *sq.*, 43 *sqq.*; M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 157 *sqq.*

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 49; compare M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 143 *sq.*

[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 169.

[4] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 176, 177; J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 50.

natives undertook voyages in former times to the distant and solitary island of Nukuor, where the shells are to be found in more accessible situations, and where the voyagers obtained them in exchange for thread made from the fibres of coco-nuts. Another popular ornament consists of bracelets made from tortoise-shell. Both the necklaces and the bracelets had the value of money in the Mortlock Islands.[1]

Houses. The houses of the Mortlock Islanders are far inferior to those of their neighbours on the high volcanic islands, but they are better and cleaner than the huts of the Marshall Islanders. They consist merely of a thatched gable roof, supported on a solid wooden framework, and reaching to the ground or near it.[2]

Club-houses. A notable feature in the social life of the people is the men's club-house or council-house (*fel*), a large building some forty feet long by twenty-five feet wide and more than twenty feet high. In it the canoes are usually kept, and in it sleep the village chief and all the male inhabitants who are either unmarried or temporarily separated from their wives and families. Every village has such a club-house (*fel*), which varies in size and solidity of structure with the importance of the village. All public business is transacted and all visits of strangers are received in it; the women of the village are forbidden to set foot in the building, but there is no law or custom to prevent women of other villages from entering it at will. The reason for this seemingly curious distinction will perhaps be apparent later on. As the club-house is primarily intended to afford shelter against the rain and the wind, it is plainly but solidly built; the interior is empty, the floor is covered with mats on which the inmates sleep at night. Round about it are grouped the small houses (called *im*) in which the women live either alone or with their husbands. Similar club-houses or council-houses are found in other parts of Micronesia, as in the Gilbert Islands, in Ponape, in Yap, and in the Pelew Islands. In all cases the original and principal object of the institution was probably to provide a sleeping-place for bachelors and

Object of the club-houses.

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 47; M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 134, 135.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 17. As to the houses and house-building, see M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 145 *sqq.*

for men who were obliged, for ceremonial or other religious reasons, to absent themselves for a time from the society of their wives.[1] For while in many of these islands the relations between the sexes are in some respects, according to our views, exceedingly loose, they are in other respects extremely strict and necessitate a separation of the sexes such as is not dreamed of in civilized society.

Totemic and exogamous clans with maternal descent.

The natives of Namoluk, of the Mortlock Islands, and of all the Caroline Islands are divided into clans. Each clan (*ainan*) has its own name, its own traditions concerning its origin, and reveres certain animals or plants, from which it believes itself to be descended. The mother passes on the name and the membership of her clan by inheritance to her children. The mother's brother stands to the children of his sisters in a more intimate relationship than the children's own father. All the members of a clan regard each other as forming a great family; accordingly they may not injure one another; they must avenge wrongs done to any one of them, and they may not marry among themselves, because they regard each other as blood-relations.[2] To put all this in technical language, the Caroline Islanders are divided into totemic and exogamous clans with descent in the maternal line. This discovery of totemism, combined with exogamy, as a universal feature of native society in the Caroline Islands is due to Dr. Max Girschner, whom a nine years' residence in the islands and an intimate knowledge of the language entitle to speak with authority on the subject. It fits in with the discovery of totemism, combined with exogamy, by Father Erdland in the Marshall Islands[3]; and it fits in with the discovery of totemism, combined with exogamy, in Yap, another of the Caroline Islands.[4] Taken together with the evidence for the existence of totemism, combined with exogamy, in the Pelew Islands, which has been longer known, and to which I called attention a good many years ago,[5] these discoveries may be said to establish totemism and exogamy, with maternal descent of the totem, as characteristic features of Micronesian society. The exist-

Totemism and exogamy, with maternal descent, characteristic of Micronesian society.

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 17-19, 27; M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 145, 161.
[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 104.
[3] Above, pp. 77 *sq.*
[4] See below, pp. 163 *sq.*
[5] *Totemism and Exogamy*, ii. 183 *sq.*

ence of these institutions among the Micronesians is all the more remarkable, because, with a single somewhat doubtful exception, little or no traces of totemism and exogamy have been recorded among the Polynesians, the near kinsmen of the Micronesians. The single exception is Samoa, where, as I endeavoured to show in a former volume,[1] the worship paid by particular families to particular species of animals, plants, and other natural objects is at least suggestive of totemism, though there is nothing to show that, if totemism did once exist among the Samoans, it was ever combined with exogamy. The exception loses nothing of its significance when we observe that, of all the principal groups of islands in Polynesia, the Samoan archipelago is the nearest to Micronesia. The positive evidence of the existence of totemism in Micronesia may therefore reasonably be allowed to strengthen the less sure evidence of its former existence in Samoa, though the indications of totemism in Samoa, which I pointed out very many years ago,[2] were disputed by no less an authority than my revered master, the late Sir Edward Tylor.[3]

Legends of the totemic clans.

Among the totemic clans of the Mortlock Islanders there is one, the Sopun or Sauefan clan, which traces its descent from the sea-eel (*sauefan*), and consequently reveres the sea-eel (*sauefan*), as well as two other sorts of fish. They say that long ago a sea-eel came down from heaven enclosed in the trunk of a tree; whereupon it created the island of Satoan and then gave birth to a girl, who afterwards married (*sopun*, "to meet") a man from Tuk and became the mother of the clan. The Sauenaup clan say that on the sands of Oneup, one of the Mortlock Islands, a fish of the *uda* species gave birth to a girl, who was afterwards taken to wife by a man of the Sofa clan. The Sauenaup clan consequently reveres the *uda* fish. The Sor clan, whose name means "apple of the eye," say that once on a time a crab lived in the mud, but that when rain poured down, the creature crept out of its hole and laid eggs. From the eggs there arose a girl. A woman of the

[1] *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 200 *sqq.*

[2] *Totemism* (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 88.

[3] (Sir) E. B. Tylor, "Remarks on Totemism," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, xxviii. (1898) pp. 142 *sq.*

Sopun clan found her lying in a hollow of the ground, adopted her, and afterwards gave her in marriage to some immigrants from Tuk, who, according to the legend, had sprung from the apple of the eye of Likoapupfanu, the mother of mankind. The clan reveres the same fish as the Sopun clan. The Sofa clan say that in Oneup a *sarau* fish gave birth to a girl, who afterwards married a man of Oneup. This man had the good fortune to catch in a noose (*so*) a shark, which had devoured a man and afterwards kept constantly prowling near the shore. In vain had people sought to lure the monster by a bait of dogs and fowls. The noose consisted of the tough bark of a coco-nut palm frond (*fa*). The clan consequently reveres the *sarau* fish to which it owes its origin. Other clans revere other or the same fish, and tell other tales of their origin.[1]

Exogamy and maternal descent discovered in the Mortlocks by Kubary.

The existence of exogamous clans with maternal descent in the Mortlock Islands had been previously recorded by the acute and well-informed observer J. S. Kubary,[2] but he failed to detect totemism, which was natural enough, since he only spent three months in the islands, and totemism appears to be one of the last social phenomena to attract the attention even of an intelligent enquirer. We have seen that Father Erdland only discovered totemism in the Marshall Islands after a prolonged residence in the archipelago and shortly before he quitted them to return to Europe.[3]

Law of exogamy very stringent.

The law of exogamy—in other words, the prohibition of marriage and of sexual intercourse between members of the same clan—is regarded by the natives of the central Caroline Islands, among whom the Mortlock Islanders are to be numbered, as a divine institution, and its breach, in their opinion, is punished by the higher powers with sickness or death. But the punishment of the crime is by no means always left to the higher powers; that is, to the gods or the deified spirits of men. On this subject Kubary tells us that "the sexual union of members of a clan is deemed the most flagrant incest, and would, without more ado, find an avenger in every member of the clan. Nothing but death

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 128 *sq.*

[2] J. S. Kubary, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *op. cit.* pp. 22 *sqq.*

[3] Above, p. 78.

would expiate such an offence."[1] Hence this marriage law exercises a profound influence on the whole social life of the natives and contributes to that remarkable separation of members of the same family, but of different sexes, which is characteristic of the Micronesians and of many other savage races, who observe a similar law of exogamy and regard a breach of it with similar horror as a crime worthy of death. It is this dread of incest which in the Mortlock Islands ordains that unmarried men and boys, from the age when they can speak, may never pass the night in their parents' houses, but must always sleep in the bachelors' club-house, where their meals are brought to them at evening by their mothers or sisters. Only when a son is sick may his mother remove him to her own house and nurse him there. Unmarried girls sleep in the houses of their parents.[2]

Separation of the sexes.

The same fear of improper relations between the sexes is at the root of a ceremonious etiquette which members of the same family, but of different sexes, observe towards each other. These rules of behaviour a father is bound to observe towards his daughters, a mother towards her sons, and brothers and sisters towards each other. In presence of these relations, as in presence of a chief, one may not stand, but must sit down; if one is obliged to pass them on narrow paths, one must first ask their leave and then pass them in a crouching posture or creeping on the ground. One allows them always to go in front; one avoids drinking from a vessel which they have just used; one does not touch them but keeps at a certain distance from them; and one regards their heads as especially sacred.[3] For example, it happened that the ethnologist Kubary received permission to use as his own a chief's house, which the great man temporarily vacated in his favour. There Kubary was visited by the chief's wife and daughter, who often spent the day with him. While they sat on the ground, it sometimes happened that the chief himself entered the house, and at such times he always entered stooping low and remained sitting on the ground till the women had left the house. When Kubary asked the chief why he thus stooped low in

Etiquette between father and daughter, and between mother and son.

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 28. [2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 164.
[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 164.

presence of his own daughter, the chief replied that in virtue of the law of maternal descent his daughter did not belong to his clan, and that consequently, if he did not stoop before her, she would never need to stoop before him. But when Kubary asked the daughter why her father stooped in her presence, she answered that if he did not do so, she might fall sick and die.[1] The answers of father and daughter to the question are obviously inconsistent; probably neither of them gives the original motive for the custom, which, viewed in connexion with the widespread etiquette of mutual avoidance between near relations of opposite sexes,[2] can hardly have been other than a desire to preclude the possibility of improper relations between the sexes; in short, the motive was probably a fear of incest, which most savages regard with the deepest horror.

Etiquette between brother and sister.

Among the Mortlock Islanders the mutual avoidance of brother and sister appears to be as strictly maintained as the mutual avoidance of father and daughter, and the original motive of the custom was in all probability the same. Brother and sister never sleep in the same house; the brother, if he is unmarried, always sleeps in the men's club-house (*fel*), while the daughter sleeps with her mother in her dwelling (*im*). A married woman may not, in the presence of her husband, stand beside her own brother while he is sitting down, and she may not touch him with her hand. If she is walking along the shore and sees him sitting down, she must invite him to get up, and if he refuses and she cannot help passing him, she does so in a stooping posture. When a modern Mortlock Islander is asked the reason of the custom, he replies that the woman is not the man's equal, and that if his sister stood over him he would die.[3] The reason thus assigned, like those assigned for the similar etiquette observed by a father towards his daughter, has probably been invented after the true original reason—the desire to avoid incest—had been forgotten.

[1] J. S. Kubary, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *op. cit.* p. 28.

[2] For evidence of the custom, see *Totemism and Exogamy*, Index, *s.v.* "Avoidance"; E. Westermarck, *History of Human Marriage*, Fifth Edition (London, 1921), i. 437 *sqq.* (who does not accept the explanation of the custom suggested in the text).

[3] J. S. Kubary, "Die Bewohner der Mortlock-Inseln," *op. cit.* pp. 27 *sq.*

Reasons for separating brothers from sisters.

It deserves to be noticed that, from the point of view of these people, the motives for separating brothers from their sisters are much more stringent than the motives for separating fathers from their daughters; for whereas, under the law of maternal descent, father and daughter belong to different clans and are therefore so far marriageable with each other, brothers and sisters always belong to the same clan and are therefore debarred from marrying each other by the fundamental law of clan exogamy; from which it follows that a sexual union between them would be a double incest, in so far as it would violate both the tie of blood and the law of exogamy, whereas a similar union between father and daughter would only violate the tie of blood, but would not clash with the law of exogamy. Similarly, the sexual union of a mother with her son would be a double incest, since, in virtue of the rule of maternal descent, mother and son are both members of the same clan as well as near blood-relations. Thus while, with a rule of maternal descent, the law of exogamy of itself suffices to bar the marriage of brothers with their sisters and of mothers with their sons, it presents no obstacle whatever to the marriage of fathers with their daughters, since, given maternal descent, fathers and daughters always belong to different clans and are therefore marriageable. Hence to explain the mutual avoidance of fathers and daughters among the Mortlock Islanders, as among some other savages who observe the custom of maternal descent, it is necessary to look for another principle than the law of exogamy. The principle in question is probably no other than that deeply rooted aversion to the sexual commerce of near relations of which the law of exogamy itself is the most general expression.

Reasons for separating mothers from sons, and fathers from daughters.

Rules of avoidance with paternal descent.

On the other hand, in tribes which observe the custom of paternal descent, fathers and daughters necessarily belong to the same clan, and their sexual union is barred by the law of exogamy; whereas mothers and sons necessarily belong to different clans, and therefore are so far free to marry each other. Hence in tribes with paternal descent of the clan, while the mutual avoidance of fathers and daughters is explicable by the law of exogamy alone, the mutual avoidance of mothers and sons is not so explicable, and

Repugnance to marriage of near kin.

to account for it we must fall back on that instinctive repugnance to the marriage of near kin which lies at the base of exogamy.

Exogamy probably devised to prevent the marriage of brothers with sisters.

Lastly, it should be noticed that, whether the rule of descent be maternal or paternal, the sexual union of brothers and sisters is always barred by the law of exogamy, since in all normal forms of primitive society brothers and sisters always belong to the same clan, whether they inherit it from their mother or from their father. This observation tends to confirm the view that the rule of exogamy was primarily instituted for the purpose of barring the marriage of brothers with sisters, and that the prohibitions of the marriage of mothers with sons and of fathers with daughters were subsequent additions to the code, which were more or less clumsily fitted into the exogamous system, being usually left in the unsatisfactory position of alternatives to each other and nowhere united successfully in a single system, except in the elaborate eight-class arrangement of the Central Australian aborigines.[1]

Forbidden degrees of marriage.

Among the Mortlock Islanders, in addition to the prohibition of marriage between members of the same clan, marriage is forbidden between parents and children, between uncles and nieces, between aunts and nephews, between brothers and sisters, and between cousins who are the children either of two brothers or of two sisters. On the other hand, marriage is allowed between two cross-cousins, the children of a brother and sister respectively.[2] We have seen that a similar discrimination between the marriage of cousins is made by the Marshall Islanders, and I then pointed out that this distinction between marriageable and non-marriageable cousins is widespread in savage society and probably dates from the very origin of the marriage system.[3]

Sexual liberty allowed to the unmarried.

Apart from these restrictions, unmarried people among the Mortlock Islanders are permitted and exercise practically unlimited sexual liberty among themselves, and this licence

[1] For fuller details and explanations, see *Totemism and Exogamy*, iv. 71 *sqq.*; *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, ii. 221 *sqq.*

[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 167. The writer's statement with regard to the marriage of cousins is confused, but his meaning seems clear.

[3] Above, p. 76.

is not deemed immoral. Young girls avail themselves of it without reproach; chastity is not expected of them, and is hardly, if at all, regarded as a virtue. But the outward forms of decency are strictly observed, and any liberties, even of speech, taken by a man in presence of women excite universal indignation, and draw down on the offender an immediate reprimand from the bystanders.[1] While thus in the Mortlock Islands the unmarried members of society lead, without reproof, what we should consider a very immoral life, the women after marriage are reported to compare most favourably in respect of morality with the women of the neighbouring islands. They are faithful and devoted wives and mothers, affectionate and attentive both to their husbands and their children. To strangers they are, or used to be, so shy that Kubary was a week in the islands before he saw a woman.[2] This contrast or, as it might seem to us, contradiction between the ethical standard observed before and after marriage is a common feature of social life among savages.

Fidelity of wives.

A curious consequence of the division of the people into exogamous clans, with descent in the maternal line, is that the children are really children only for the mother, while for the father they are strangers, not being members of his clan. In case of war between the clans of the father and mother, father and son are bound to be ranged on opposite sides.[3] Another consequence of the exogamous system is of course that a man is bound to look for a wife outside of his own clan. The wooing is not attended with difficulty; a present to the damsel's father is of little importance, since the father cannot dispose of his daughter in marriage against her will, she not being a member of his clan. The persons who have the most say in the matter are the mother, her brother, and the wife of the chief of the village to which the mother belongs. Custom gives a man, along with his wife, the right to marry all her unwedded sisters, but of this privilege only chiefs avail themselves.[4] Thus the Mortlock Islanders observe the custom of the sororate, of which

Children strangers to their fathers.

Marriage customs.

The sororate.

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 165; J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 29 *sq.*

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 30.

[3] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 37.

[4] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 37.

examples have already met us among the Gilbert and Marshall Islanders.[1]

Customs at childbirth.

When a woman feels her time approaching, she retires to a special hut set apart for the purpose, which no man may enter. There, in her hour of need, she receives no human help, for the natives are convinced that incantations and magical rites are the only effectual means of preventing a miscarriage, which, in their opinion, is always brought about by the action of evil spirits. Of these the most powerful is the Black Spirit, who bears the name of Lukaisonup. He is a sylvan spirit, all covered with hair, and of a most repulsive aspect. To ward him off, an exorcizer takes up his post in front of the hut, and endeavours to repel the foul fiend by personal violence. In addition, six men with lighted torches keep watch by night. Moreover, they throw bread-fruit and fish into the neighbouring wood or hang them on a tree, that the spirit may come and devour them. If they hear him smacking his lips, and next morning the food has disappeared, it is a good omen ; but if the food is found untouched, it is a conclusive proof that the fiend has not been lured away, and the worst may confidently be anticipated. There are also two female goblins, a pair of sisters, who seek to kill the woman in travail by boring a hole in her bosom and picking out her eyes.[2]

Seclusion at menstruation.

On the first signs of the attainment of puberty a girl retires to a special hut set apart for the purpose, where she passes a month in seclusion. At each recurrence of the symptoms she similarly retires, but only for four days.[3]

§ 3. *Death and Funeral Rites*

Funeral and burial rites.

When a death has taken place, relations and friends assemble in the house to partake of the funeral feast, in the course of which songs are sung "to comfort the mourners." At the same time prayers are offered to the supreme god Lukeilan. The corpse is rubbed over with turmeric, tied up in mats, and buried in a shallow grave with the head to the east. But the bodies of persons who have died by violence

[1] Above, pp. 38, 77. [2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 167.
[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 168.

or fallen in battle are sunk in the ocean, that they may be united to the brave Anuset, the god of the sea. In the grave with the dead are buried flowers, wreaths, and broken canoes, but no personal ornaments, for otherwise, they say, the spirits would be jealous. On the spot, when the grave has been filled in, they lay conch-shells in a circle, and for five nights fish, fruits, and wreaths. In former times they also erected on the grave a hut, in which a watchman lived so long as they supposed that the flesh of the corpse had not wholly rotted away.[1] This custom was probably connected with the common belief that the soul of the dead lingers about his mouldering body until decomposition is complete.

Taboo on fruit-trees after a death.

After a death it is customary for the chief to lay a taboo on the coco-nuts or bread-fruit of the land which belonged to the deceased. In consequence no one may gather the nuts or the fruit or even set foot on the land. The taboo may last for several months; during its continuance the mourners receive food from relations and friends. When the taboo is over, the nuts and fruits which have accumulated in the interval are at the disposal of the mourners. On this occasion another feast is held, at which the relatives of the deceased exchange presents.[2] We are not told what is the motive for thus laying a taboo on the fruit-trees of the deceased for a certain time after the death. Perhaps the intention is to leave the fruit at the disposal of the ghost, in case he should care to come and refresh himself with it before setting out on the long journey to the spirit-land.

Some of these rites plainly imply a belief in the survival of the soul after death, and a desire to contribute in some measure to the comfort of the departed.

§ 4. *The Fate of the Soul after Death*

Fate of the soul after death.

But in the case of the Mortlock Islanders we are not simply left to infer a belief in the survival of the soul from the attentions which they bestow on their dead. They have

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 168; J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 39.

[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 168 *sq.*; J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 31.

very definite ideas as to the fate of the soul after it has shuffled off the body, and these ideas have been recorded by our authorities. The natives think that at death the soul, which they call *nenin*, quits the body, and can assume the shape of a sea-bird and in that form appear to the survivors. Its subsequent destiny depends on the nature of the life which the deceased led on earth. If he was free from sin and his soul was a powerful one, the friendly god Olaitin conducts it by a ladder up to heaven and guides it safe between the two rocks, which alternately jostle and separate to all eternity at heaven's gate. In heaven such a happy and mighty soul becomes a human god (*anu aramas*).[1] There in these celestial mansions the souls of the blessed dead continue to lead much the same sort of life which they passed on earth, only they have no need to labour or to take thought for their food. They deck themselves with flowers, anoint their bodies with oil and turmeric, bathe, feast, and dance the livelong night till break of day. When the sun mounts higher the spirits betake themselves to rest, and may not roam about until the afternoon. Then, as the day begins to decline, the dancing starts afresh; or the spirits may descend to earth, revisit their relations and friends, guard them in danger, advise them through the mouth of seers, and appear to them in dreams. The mansions of the spirits are under the guardianship of the heavenly watchman, Anunemas. They do not stand side by side, like houses on earth, but one on the top of the other, in the style of our modern flats, and they have all their special names, which are often mentioned in the songs that the natives sing to the accompaniment of the dance.[2] There is also a bathing-place which is used by all the spirits in common. When they duck under water everything seems to them dark. But before they can be drowned a spirit called Rothe comes, takes them by the hand, and gives them the leaves of a certain tree, and no sooner have they touched the leaves than they are made whole.[3]

The soul goes up to heaven.

The heavenly mansions.

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 191 *sq.* The plural is *anun aramas*, human gods or spirits of the dead. See *id.* pp. 186, 193.

[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 186.

[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 192.

The souls of chiefs and noblemen maintain in the other world the dignified superiority which they enjoyed here below. Some of them, who distinguished themselves in life by their statecraft or their feats in war, become after death the mighty guardians of their respective clans.[1] The different islands and districts have also each their guardian spirits among the sainted dead. The guardian spirit of Namoluk, for example, is named Ikairu; he had his seat in life at Saral. There his image might be seen carved out of a block of bread-fruit wood, about an ell high; the god was represented in a sitting posture, with his legs stretched out, his figure painted and adorned with a necklace and a girdle. The image was placed in a very large canoe, which stood in the men's club-house (*fel*). When the canoe had to be used the god's leave was asked beforehand, and his image was removed from the canoe. In time of war the image was renewed. The people thought that this deified chief could send storms and sickness; they presented offerings to him at harvest and at fishing expeditions. The district about Saral, which had been his home in life, was accounted sacred; nobody dared to pluck coco-nuts or bread-fruit there. In former days similar patron deities were revered in the other islands.[2]

The souls of dead chiefs become the guardian spirits of their clans.

But the souls of wicked men who have sinned in life cannot enter into heaven. The god Olofat, of whose adventures many tales are told by the Caroline Islanders, drags them to a place of doom and casts them into a great pit called *Setepwolis*, or the Sea of Filth, where they remain lying, without power to stir hand or foot. But at the destruction of the world they will die.[3]

Fate of wicked souls.

The souls of those who fell in battle are carried by the war-god Rasim to his special heaven, where the combat is continued. The souls of women who died in pregnancy or in childbed cannot dwell with the gods, because they offend the delicate nostrils of these divine beings. So they come to the land of Pikenekataula, the far land, which lies where earth and sky meet. Again, the souls of such as have hanged themselves are likewise excluded from heaven,

Fate of the slain in battle, of women dying in childbed, and of the hanged.

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 192. [2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 192.
[3] M. Girschner, *l.c.*

because the gods cannot bear to see them with their tongues lolling out of their mouths. As for the souls of the Sor clan, they say that they are dragged by spirits to a land called Fanilan, where they are thrown into a deep sand-hole and stretched out at full length.[1]

§ 5. *The Worship of the Dead*

Communication with the souls of the dead.

The destiny of man in this world is determined by the high gods; it is they who hear his prayers, but they cannot speak with him. That can only be done by the spirits of the human dead (*anun aramas*). Every man believes himself to be compassed about by the souls of his departed forefathers; they hover about him unseen, protect him from dangers, and know what will befall him. But they cannot speak with everybody, only with a particular class of persons, the spirit-seers or necromancers, whom the natives call *Waitaua*. The art of communicating with spirits can be learned, but it requires at the same time a certain natural aptitude; fathers teach their sons, and elder brothers impart the secret to their younger brothers. Before he addresses himself to his office, the necromancer prepares himself for his mystic function by the use of certain magical foods; these consist of pounded coco-nut leaves, over which incantations have been muttered; they also include fruits of a particular sort of tree which are believed to bear the prints of the nails of spirits, who love to munch them. If the necromancer does not eat these magical foods, or not enough of them, he cannot report clearly the words of the spirits, and his utterances are no more than a confused babble.[2]

The necromancers.

Consultation of the spirits of the dead by means of a necromancer.

So when a man desires to consult the spirits, he betakes himself to a necromancer or wizard, acquaints him with his business, and makes him a present. The wizard then sits down on the ground and invokes the spirits. They come and light upon him; they take possession of him; he becomes a man inspired. The signs of inspiration are a convulsive trembling of the hands, a violent nodding of the head, and other equally manifest tokens of the divine afflatus. The sage now falls into a state which the natives

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 192. [2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 193.

call *merik*; the spirits open his mouth and speak through him. Now one spirit announces his presence, and now another; for every spirit can, if he pleases, make known his answer to the seer, though the answer is always couched in a special language, quite different from the speech of daily life. The state of possession or inspiration does not last very long, usually about a quarter of an hour; and on awakening from his trance the seer communicates to his hearers the message which he has received from the spirits. These necromancers, we are told, are by no means conscious impostors. They are gifted with, or suffer from, a nervous sensibility exaggerated by auto-suggestion, by virtue of which they can readily throw themselves into an hypnotic state.[1]

Thus the belief in the survival of the soul after death, and in the power of the dead to affect the survivors, is deeply rooted in the minds of the Mortlock Islanders, and exercises a potent influence on their lives. Indeed, according to Kubary, the gods (*anu*) of the Mortlock Islanders are no other than the spirits of their dead forefathers, and their religion consists in the worship of these mighty beings.[2] The statement requires some limitation, as we shall see presently, but undoubtedly it contains a large element of truth. The worship of ancestors is said to be the main prop of the authority exerted by the chiefs. The chief of a clan is the absolute ruler of the estates belonging to the clan, and he has the right at any time of laying them under a taboo (*pŭaŭu*), in consequence of which no one may enjoy the products of the land so long as the taboo continues. Usually the taboo only affects the coco-nut trees, and from it are excepted the palms which surround a house. Such a taboo is regularly imposed every year at the time of the bread-fruit harvest, and is simply an economic measure imposed for the common good. Without it the natives, at the time when they might subsist on bread-fruit alone, would simultaneously consume the ripe coco-nuts, and thus would leave no supply of food for the time when the season of the bread-fruit is over and the north wind blows. Whereas during the continuance of the taboo, which lasts three or

Worship of ancestors.

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 193 *sq.* [2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 33, 35.

four months, a quantity of coco-nuts is accumulated sufficient to maintain the population in the time of scarcity.[1]

Political influence of chiefs based on the worship of their ancestral spirits.

On the subject of the support which, in the Mortlock Islands, religion lends to the civil authorities, I will quote the evidence of Kubary, one of our best authorities on the customs and beliefs of the islanders. He says: "The greatest influence which the chief exercises over the clan is derived from the religious worship. The spirits of the forefathers are the gods (*anu*) of the Mortlock Islander, and it is natural that the gods of the capital, the forefathers of the chief, should be regarded as the principal gods of the clan. These principal gods protect the chief and avenge every wrong done him. This circumstance of itself suffices, in a simple untutored people, to maintain the authority of the chief, as the following example will make clear. As soon as a Mortlock Islander falls ill he attempts to invoke his own gods, the spirits of his forefathers; but if no improvement follows, his nearest relations consult together and seek to discover the cause of the illness. If it turns out that the sick man has kept a great fish for himself, or secretly broken the taboo by fetching some coco-nuts, there is nothing for it but to invoke the gods of the chief. That can only be done with the permission of the chief himself, and in order to obtain it presents are sent to him, the fault confessed, and forgiveness entreated. The chief then invokes his gods and reveals their will."[2]

The spirits of dead chiefs are the gods of the clans.

To illustrate the worship of the spirits of dead chiefs, Kubary takes the case of the island of Ta, one of the Mortlock group. At the time of Kubary's visit the island numbered two hundred and ninety-four inhabitants, who were divided into four, or rather five, clans, for one of the clans,

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 30 *sq.*; M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 163.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 33 *sq.* On this passage Dr. Girschner makes the following observations: "That the gods of the chief are the most powerful is certainly not the assumption of the natives; for the other clans have also their guardian spirits, who were once presumably famous chiefs. True it is that the chief, like every other man, is guarded by the spirits of his clan. That the chief invokes his gods and reveals their will is also incorrect; it is just the chief who cannot invoke his spirits and converse with them, for in that case they would be obliged to descend and sit upon him, which in the presence of the chief they dare not do, since spirits like other folk are subject to the laws of polite society. This explanation was given me by a professional medium." See M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 164 note.

named Sor, was divided into two branches. The five original or first chiefs of these clans are the five great gods of the island ; but the names which they bear as gods are not the names which they bore as men on earth. Thus the first chief of the clan Sopun was called Matoylam, but his divine name is Sapinfa ; the first chief of the clan Inemarau was called Moeto, but his divine name is Saupiong ; the first chief of the clan Sor Sauyan was called Reybofisz, but his divine name is Ulupuauu ; the first chief of the clan Sor Apila was called Pukang, but his divine name is Terielap ; the first chief of the clan Ue was called Aza, but his divine name is Piol. The living chiefs of these clans are the priests of their respective deities.[1]

The spirits of other dead are also worshipped.

But while the gods of the clans, who are the spirits of dead chiefs, are the principal, they are by no means the only gods of the people. Every headman of a village (*bey*) naturally reveres the spirits of his own particular forefathers and calls upon them in all the ordinary occasions of life, before he thinks of applying to the principal gods, whose worship is somewhat costly. As the spirit of every dead man, or at all events of every one who is admitted to the mansions of the blest, necessarily becomes a divinity (*anu*), it is plain that in the course of nature the number of deities would be multiplied out of all proportion to the handful of living mortals on earth ; even if the privilege of apotheosis were restricted to the spirits of dead chiefs, the pantheon would still be inconveniently crowded. Accordingly a certain discrimination between the spirits is imperatively called for : the line must be drawn somewhere. In point of fact only men who specially distinguished themselves in life are worshipped as gods after death. This at once reduces the pantheon to a manageable quantity : it is as if Englishmen worshipped only the men who sleep their last sleep under the marble monuments and the mouldering banners of Westminster and St. Paul's. Between these illustrious dead and living wights the chief is the natural intercessor, since he too may one day be numbered in the roll of the great divinities. Yet he cannot present himself

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 35. The population of the island of Ta is given on Kubary's map of the islands.

to his divine ancestors as the direct representative of his people; he may address their blessed spirits, but he dare not invoke them; to do so is the function of the wizard or ghost-seer, whose office we have already described. That sage (*au-ua-ro-ar*) invokes the gods sitting on the ground with his feet doubled up under him, and rubbing the inner side of his legs with his hands, while with hideous howls and whines he works himself up into an ecstasy. The chief then puts his questions or mentions his requests, and from the utterances of the seer he gathers the will of the gods. The profession of ghost-seer is not necessarily hereditary; the deity himself chooses whom he wills to be his interpreter. But the seer is not the minister of any one god in particular; he is able to call up all spirits who consent to hear him.[1]

§ 6. *Gods and Spirits of Nature*

Gods and spirits of nature.

However, the pantheon of the Mortlock Islanders is by no means limited to the spirits of the illustrious dead. The fancy of the natives, indeed, peoples the whole of their natural surroundings—the sky, the sea, the woods, the earth, the water-pools—with gods and spirits past counting. Thus

Tree spirits.

the great trees in the interior of the island are tenanted by a god, who plays his pranks only on children and young girls; and every village has on the beach some thick old trees inhabited by the guardian spirit of the community. So whenever a canoe puts out to sea for a long voyage, these trees must be guarded with the utmost vigilance against the designs of unfriendly neighbours, lest some misfortune should befall the mariners.[2]

The sky-god Lukeilan or Luk.

The highest of all the gods is Lukeilan, Lugeilan, or Luk. The name is said to mean "the middle of heaven." According to the natives of Namoluk, this great deity was not created, but has existed from the beginning, and will never die. His home is the sky; he is lord of all the gods,

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 35. From this passage we see that Kubary was quite aware that the chief cannot of himself invoke the spirits of his ancestors and reveal their will, and that to do so he requires the mediation of a seer. This obviates one of Dr. Girschner's objections. See above, p. 122 note 2.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 36. A number of the gods of various departments of nature (the sky, the sea, the woods, etc.) are enumerated by M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 185-187.

and bears rule over the sun and the rain, the thunder and the storm. He created the sky, and the gods, and the whole world. The Mortlock Islanders call the Supreme Being, *Anulap*, that is, the Great Spirit, and believe that he created Luk and made him Lord of all, to the end that men should address their prayers to him.[1] This great god is especially revered by carpenters and artisans, who invoke him at their work by repeating the monosyllable "Lug! Lug!"[2] The sky-god has to wife the goddess Inoaeman, who, like him, is uncreated and with him rules the sky.[3]

Olofat, lord of fire.

The eldest son of this great pair of deities is Olofat. He is of a mischievous disposition and the lord of fire, which he sent to men on earth by a bird, his messenger. The bird carried the fire in his beak and flew with it from tree to tree, inserting the virtue of the fire in the wood, from which men extract it by friction. According to the Mortlock Islands tradition, Olofat coveted his father Luk's wife and was banished for his presumption. But the people of Namoluk say that it was Luk's sister on whom Olofat set his heart, and when she scorned him, he turned her into a rat, and to this day she lives as a rat on the roof of Luk's house. Afterwards Olofat was made lord over the souls of the damned, and at the destruction of the world he will die.[4]

Olaitin, conductor of the souls of the dead.

Olaitin is the Mercury of the Mortlock Islands. According to some he is the son, according to others the brother of Luk. As we have seen, he conducts the souls of good men after death up the ladder which leads from earth to heaven. At heaven's gate there are two rocks for ever clashing and rebounding. These prevent the souls of bad men from entering into the kingdom of heaven. But Olaitin

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 185.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 36. This writer gives the god's name as *Lugey-lang*, and explains it as compounded of *lug*, "middle," *ey*, "of," and *lang*, "sky," the whole name meaning "the middle of the sky."

[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 185.

[4] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 185. Olofat is to some extent for Micronesia what Maui is for Polynesia, the hero of many adventures. For some of the stories about him, see J. A. Cantova, in *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses*, Nouvelle Édition, xv. (Paris, 1781) pp. 306 *sq.* (who gives the name as Oulefat); O. von Kotzebue, *Voyage of Discovery into the South Sea*, iii. 198 *sqq.*; A. von Chamisso, *Reise um die Welt* (Leipzig, 1836), ii. 260 *sqq.* (who gives the name as Olifat); L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde, Historique*, ii. 108 *sqq.* (who gives the name as Olifad).

sees to it that the souls of the good slip between these moving rocks, the Symplegades of the Pacific, and so make their way into the abode of bliss.[1]

Inemek, goddess of love.

The goddess of love is Inemek or Inemak. She is young and fair, and imparts to mortals the power of inspiring love. Hence she is invoked when youths and maidens attain to puberty. From her are derived the magical charms used to attract the affections of the other sex.[2]

Rasim, the war-god.

The war-god is Rasim. To him prayers are offered before battle. He hates women. Hence no man may have any intercourse with women in time of war, otherwise he would die a sudden death; Rasim would stab him with his spear. Rasim also cannot bear that the bodies of men who fall in battle should be buried in the earth; accordingly they are thrown into the sea, lest some disaster should happen in a future war. The souls of these heroes are conducted by Rasim to a special heaven called Uturas, where they carry on the combats begun on earth. There high honours await the soldier who has escaped without a wound.[3] Among the Mortlock Islanders the war-god, whose help is invoked on every campaign, is revered in the shape of a sea-fish (the *Caranx*).[4]

Sea-gods. Ulap.

The preceding are all accounted sky-gods. Among the sea-gods is one Ulap, the Good Spirit. He is the god of fish and turtles, and he can turn himself into a fish. He bestows on men a catch of big fish, and they pray to him in danger. Once upon a time, they say, a canoe of Namoluk capsized, and the crew of six were surrounded by a swarm of sharks. In their distress they tied a piece of cloth to an oar and prayed to Ulap. Then a monstrous shark, with speckled skin, swam up and drove the other sharks away. So the shipwrecked mariners got safe to land.[5]

The God of the Rainbow.

But the patron god of seafaring men is *Anu en marasi*, that is, the God of the Rainbow. He beholds all that happens on the sea, and if anything displeases him, he rears himself erect to observe it closer; in other words, a rainbow

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 185.
[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 185.
[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 185.
[4] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 36.
[5] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 186.

spans the vault of heaven. For example, if the crew of a canoe should pilfer some of their captain's stores, the God of the Rainbow is angry and shows himself in all his radiance against the murky storm-clouds. At sight of it the guilty sailors are struck with fear, and by fawning on the captain seek to atone for their fault. They say that it was the God of the Rainbow who taught men the art of navigation. For he fell in love with a very beautiful woman, a native of the island of Etal, and he carried her away to a far shore, where he married her. She bore him two sons, and when they were grown up, they one day saw their mother sitting in the house and weeping, because she remembered her parents and her old home. The elder boy asked her what ailed her, and she told him how she had come to that far shore. Then the boys went to their father and asked him to let them sail away to the island of Etal, promising that they would return. So the god took a heap of sand, dipped it in the sea, and turned it into a canoe. Next he taught them the incantations to be used in sailing, also the names of the stars and of the moon, and the art of steering on the high sea. Then they embarked in the canoe and sailed away to Etal, while their father, the God of the Rainbow, hovered over them unseen. When the natives saw the strangers landing, they attacked them with clubs, but their divine sire warded off the blows, so that neither of the lads was hit. The chief of the land, who was no other than their mother's father, questioned them, and when he found that they were his grandchildren he wept, and gave them so many coco-nuts that they might have bathed in the milk of them in the canoe. He also asked them how they had made their way across the sea to Etal from the far shore. But the voice of the God of the Rainbow, who attended them unseen, forbade them to teach the people of Etal the art of seamanship. So after three nights they sailed away and returned to their mother on the far shore. She asked them after her parents, and her sons answered that they were well and had questioned them about the art of seamanship. The mother said, "Did you not teach them it?" The lads replied, "No, for a voice forbade us." Then the God of the Rainbow appeared and

How men learned the art of navigation.

said, "I was beside you on the voyage, and I warded off the blows of the clubs from you." After that he instructed them still further in the art of seamanship and let them sail once more to Etal, and now they were free to impart what they had learned to the natives of the island. That is how the art of navigation first came to mankind.[1]

Offerings and prayers to the gods.

When the natives return from a successful fishing, they do not forget the sea-gods, but throw some of their catch into the sea as an offering to the marine deities.[2] And on many other occasions the people worship the gods with prayer and sacrifice. Thus at building one of the large club-houses (*fel*) various gods or spirits are invoked to help and protect the structure. For these divine beings are believed to superintend the whole process of building, and on its completion they ascend up to heaven and report to the great sky-god Lukeilan himself whether everything has been done rightly and in accordance with custom. The names of these invisible superintendents are well known, and also the exact places which they occupy on the house-beams while the edifice is building.[3] Again, in the old days, when wars were waged in the islands, it was customary to pray and sacrifice to the great gods before the armies engaged; moreover, every man called on the spirits of his own particular forefathers to protect him. Then the conch-shells blew, the war-song was struck up, and the two sides closed in mortal strife.[4]

The fruits of the earth bestowed by the gods.

Again, all the fruits of the earth are believed to come from the gods. Hence, out of gratitude and a desire to win the favour of these high unseen powers, men offer them the produce of the ground. They think that the soul (*nenin*) of the offering ascends to the Great Spirit (*anulap*), while its outward form remains here on earth. The coco-nut palm is believed to be a gift of the Great Spirit, who threw down a coco-nut on earth in the time long ago. Bread-fruit is also a boon bestowed on men by the same mighty being. He sent it down to earth by a bird, his messenger, and the tree grew everywhere, but bore no fruit. However, two spirits, Saueor, who dwells in the south, and Saumolor, who lives

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 183.
[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 155.
[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 145 *sq.*
[4] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 172.

where no wind blows, sent a wind from the south which put a soul into the bread-fruit trees, and then they began to bear fruit. And the same process is repeated every year anew; every year the spirits put the soul into the trees, and the trees bear fruit.[1]

The art of cultivating taro taught by the spirits.

Again, the art of cultivating taro in marshy ground was formerly unknown, and men learned it from spirits. The way in which they did so was this. In Moth there was once upon a time a great dearth of fish. The people put out their nets and saw many fish swim into them, but when they drew the nets to land, there was nothing in them. So they applied for help to the people of Lukunor, one of the chief of the Mortlock Islands. Some experienced fishermen of Lukunor went accordingly to Moth and looked into the matter. One of them climbed up a coco-nut palm, and from there he saw how shoals of fish swam into the net, and then the net sank down and the fish went free. Gazing more intently, he saw how, from time to time, white hands, like those of men, appeared in the dark blue sea. Now he knew what was the matter; the spirits of the sea were robbing men of their catch. So he told the people next day to set the net, to moor it with great stones, and to provide it with a running noose which could be drawn tight with a single jerk. He himself again mounted the palm-tree, and when he saw that the spirits were again at their old tricks, he called to the people, "Look sharp! Draw in the net!" He was obeyed, and the net with its contents was carried to the club-house and there set down. Next the people rubbed coco-nuts, and prepared a feast, and filled the wooden vessels full of oil and turmeric. Then they opened the net, and in it they found a multitude of fish and the two spirits that had been stealing the fish. They pounced on the spirits, and without more ado plunged them in the trough full of turmeric, and then got up a dancing festival in their honour. The spirits were two divinities of the sea, named Menonu and Menana. Touched by the delicate attentions shown them by the people, they compounded for the thefts they had committed on the nets by going with the fishermen to Lukunor and

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 144.

teaching them the art of cultivating taro. But as for the people of Moth, they never were troubled by the spirits again in their fishing.[1]

The art of making fire and cooking food taught by a spirit.

Again, the art of making fire and of cooking food in an oven of hot stones was also communicated to men by an obliging spirit. The way in which it happened was this. Once upon a time there was a great famine in the Mortlock Islands, and all men died of hunger, except two boys. One day a spirit was drifted up on the shore by the waves. He was a very peculiar spirit, for he had no body to speak of and neither arms nor legs; in fact he had nothing but a head. He spoke to the boys and said, "Bring me to my home in the south land." Then he blew sand on the sea, so that they could walk on it without wetting their feet. So the boys took him up, and away they walked with him over the sea. The way was long, and the elder brother said, "I am weary, I can go no farther." So he turned round, sat down under a tree, and died. But the younger brother trudged on, and at last came to the south land. There in his home the spirit bade the boy make fire, fetch bread-fruit, and roast it. But the boy said, "I do not know how to do it." Then the spirit taught him to make fire by rubbing pieces of a certain sort of wood together, and next day he showed him how to make an oven of hot stones in a hollow of the ground. Five days the lad remained in south land. Then the spirit told him to make a canoe and return home, and he gave him charms, wrapt up in coco-nut bark, whereby he could restore his dead brother to life. Lastly, he said to him: "Go back, thou shalt find food in thy land, and the land shall be thine." The boy returned, restored his dead brother to life by the charms, and found plenty of fruit in his own country. Afterwards both brothers fetched women from Tuk and married them; and they taught all men to kindle fire by the friction of wood and to make ovens of hot stones.[2]

The origin of fire.

Another, and not necessarily inconsistent, myth relates, as we have seen, how the first fire was stored up in the wood of trees by a bird, which the god Olofat had sent to

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 144 *sq.*

[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 145. As to the construction of an oven (*um*), see *id.* ii. 142.

earth for the purpose.[1] The natives are acquainted with two modes of kindling fire by the friction of wood; the one is the method of the stick and groove, the other is the fire-drill.[2]

Modes of kindling fire.

At the season of bread-fruit, when the fruits begin to appear, many spirits dwell in the trees; the highest of them is Saueor, who comes from the south; to him the people pray for a good crop. A seer is commissioned to recite the prayers. For that purpose he collects gifts of food and so forth from all the inhabitants. Then he repairs to the forest, where he culls magic simples and puts them in a trumpet-shell. After that he travels through the country, blowing blasts from time to time on the shell and sprinkling its fertilizing contents on all the bread-fruit trees, which thereafter are expected to yield an abundant crop. At the end of the bread-fruit season, which lasts from about the middle of February to the end of September, there falls a month called Soropwel, which is sacred to the great god Luk. At that time no work is done; there is no fishing and no sailing on the sea; the people do nothing but pray and hold dancing-festivals night after night.[3]

Ceremonies to fertilize the bread-fruit trees.

§ 7. *Stories of the Creation and Destruction of the World*

The story of the creation of the world is told in two slightly different forms in Namoluk and the Mortlock Islands.

Namoluk story of the creation of the world.

The Namoluk version runs as follows:

The great god Lukeilan or Luk lived from the beginning and will never die. His mansion is the sky; he is the lord of heaven. First of all he created the sky and then the earth. But the earth was void; nothing grew on it. Then Luk took trees from heaven and planted them in the ground, the coco-nut palm, the bread-fruit tree, and all the rest. Now Luk wished to make men. He commanded his daughter Likoapupfanu to go down to the earth. So she went and walked about there, and because she was thirsty she drank some water from a hollow tree. But in the water was a

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 141, 185. See above, p. 125.

[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 141 *sq.* As to these methods, see above, pp. 16 *sq.*

[3] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 193. As to the date of the bread-fruit season, see *id.* ii. 176.

little animal, and she swallowed it with the water. Her divine father caused her thereby to go with child, for he said, "In her shall a human being be born." Then she gave birth to a girl called Liratu. The girl grew quickly up and by command of Luk gave birth to another girl named Inemek. Luk beheld from heaven and caused his daughter Likoapupfanu to go again with child. She now bore a boy named Ikepek, who lived with her in the house. Then Luk commanded Liratu to go and take a rib from Ikepek. She did so, and from the rib there arose a man of very handsome shape.[1] Likoapupfanu said to Liratu, "Give him to me to be my husband." Then they were married to each other.

Now Luk bethought him, what work he should give men to do. So he set them to make a canoe. The man Iefanu built a huge vessel. But Luk created the sea, that the man might sail in the canoe, and he also set the fish in the sea, the whale, the shark, the sting-ray, and all the rest; but they had no teeth. Then Luk thought again, and he created the reefs and the rocks in the sea.

Creation of the sun, moon, and stars.

The sky was now there, but the stars were still lacking. Then Luk commanded Olaitin to create them. He took the sun and set it in the sky, and afterwards the moon. In the moon Luk put a woman called Inetifath, in order that, when no stars shone, men might be able to know in what quarter the wind sat. Then Olaitin set the stars in their places. He made the rain also, that people might have something to drink when they were thirsty.[2]

The future destruction of the world.

The islanders tell of a time when the world will be destroyed. They say that a day will come when men will honour Luk no more, when they will not sacrifice to him, when they will wage wars, and commit sins; then will the Lord of the World destroy them. He will send Thopulap, the Thunder; Ainiar, the Whirlwind, who turns everything upside down; Atupuase, who throws down the trees; Lifau faunemai, who hugs sea and land; and Lisea piro, who hurls

[1] On this Dr. Girschner observes (*op. cit.* ii. 187, note 2) that this narrative of the creation of a man from a rib bears a suspicious resemblance to the similar creation story in Genesis. But his informant, who was not a Christian, assured him that he had never heard of the Biblical story, and that he had received his version of the creation legend from his father, who was also a heathen.

[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 187 *sq.*

great rocks from the sea upon the land. Then everything will go to wrack and ruin. Only the gods will live on.[1]

§ 8. *Divination by knotted Cords*

Divination by counting knots on strips of coco-nut leaves.

The natives of Namoluk and the Mortlock Islanders, like other natives of the Caroline Islands, have a mode of divination by counting the knots tied on strips of coco-nut leaves. For this purpose a person takes four strips of coco-nut leaves and ties knots in them without attending to the number of knots which he ties; it is for the god of lots to determine the fateful number. Having tied the knots thus at hazard, the person counts them by fours, and the number of the last knot is decisive. For example, if it should happen that there are six knots on a string, then the decisive number is two; if there are nine knots on a string, the decisive number is one. As there are four strings, the numbers thus obtained on the first two strings yield a lot, which bears a particular name; similarly the last two strings yield another lot, which has also its name; and a comparison of the lots yielded by the two pairs of strings gives the final result, the answer of the oracle. The names of the lots are sixteen in number, and the total number of possible variations, and therefore of answers, is two hundred and fifty-six. This system of divination is said to have originated with a celestial god named Supunemen, who was a skilful diviner and bore on his body the signs of the sixteen lots. The natives resort to this form of divination for the purpose of ascertaining the future on all important occasions of life. Thus they seek to ascertain by its means the issue of sickness, the success of a voyage or of a fishing expedition, the sort of weather they may expect to meet with, and so forth.[2] We shall see that elsewhere in the Caroline Islands the trust which the natives repose in this form of divination has exerted a most baneful influence on their fortunes, by substituting blind chance for rational prevision as their guide in the most momentous issues of life.[3]

Yet on the other hand it may perhaps be alleged that

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 191. Compare J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 36.
[2] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 199 *sq.*
[3] See below, p. 190.

This form of divination may lead to a science of arithmetic.

a form of divination, which consists in a somewhat complicated numerical calculation, betokens and at the same time promotes a certain facility in dealing with numbers which exceeds the capacity of low savages and might in time lay the foundation of a science of arithmetic. For it may be laid down as a general truth that all the sciences have been founded on practical human needs rather than on a disinterested desire of knowledge; it is by seeking an immediate good or an immediate relief from suffering that man has been led step by step to those Pisgah heights of speculation from which he surveys the universal scheme of things, wherein the existence of our species appears to shrivel up to a point in space and to a moment in time. Thus, to take the particular instance before us, the wish to pry into the future, if it has utterly failed of its object, has nevertheless placed within reach of the enquirer an instrument which he can turn to better account in other directions, a golden key which in the hands of a master may unlock many a secret chamber in the palace of eternity.

§ 9. *Navigation and Astronomy*

Navigation favours the rise of astronomy.

In endeavouring to meet the practical necessities of their life the Mortlock Islanders have incidentally stumbled upon the elements of another science, which is astronomy. With them, as with many islanders, astronomy is ancillary to the art of navigation; and it has been well observed that in the Caroline Archipelago and the neighbouring groups the most skilful navigators are found, not in the high volcanic islands, but on the low coralline atolls. The reason is simple. The high islands as a rule are not only larger and more fertile, but much more varied in their natural resources, with far ampler means to satisfy the wants of man than the tiny, flat, almost waterless coralline islets which barely rise above the level of the sea. Hence, whereas the inhabitants of the high islands find all, or most, of the necessaries of life at their doors, and have consequently little inducement to tempt the stormy ocean in quest of superfluities, the natives of the atolls are almost driven to sea in order to procure elsewhere the material comforts which a niggard nature has denied

them at home. And when the atolls are divided by a great stretch of open sea from the higher islands, where supplies are obtainable, the natives have every inducement to study the stars as the only guides by which, destitute as they are of compass, sextant, and chronometer, they can steer their frail barks across long leagues of trackless ocean.[1]

Knowledge of the heavenly bodies acquired by the Mortlock Islanders in their voyages.

This is the case with the Mortlock Islanders. Their islands are distant some hundred and fifty nautical miles from the Ruk Islands, which appear to have been the home of their ancestors, and with which they have been in the habit of keeping up a regular communication by sea. Hence, like most of the Caroline Islanders, who are in the same natural situation and experience the same needs, the Mortlock Islanders have acquired in the course of their voyages a certain knowledge of the heavenly bodies. But this knowledge is not in possession of everybody; on the contrary, it is a secret jealously guarded by a few, for it is a source of social consideration, of influence, and even of profit. Thus the post of astronomer is a distinguished one; and every one of the petty states into which the islands are divided seeks to have its own astronomer (*pallauu*) in order to be independent of its neighbours. The science of these men in the old days could only be handed down by oral tradition; the astronomer's pupil and successor was usually his son or some specially gifted and promising relative, who from his youth upward attached himself to the sage and for years studied the art of navigation under his direction.[2] Indeed, according to the evidence collected from natives by the Jesuit Father Cantova in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, there were in the Caroline Islands regular schools, where the elements of astronomy were taught by means of a globe on which the principal stars were figured. But most of the pupils, we are told, applied themselves to the study for the sake of its utility in navigation; and with that view the master instructed them also in the points of the compass and the directions of the winds, with which it was necessary to be acquainted in voyaging at sea.[3] This

Native astronomers.

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 173.
[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 61.
[3] J. A. Cantova, in *Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses*, Nouvelle Édition, xv. (Paris, 1781) p. 313. Cantova's letter is dated Agdana, 20th March 1722.

account is in substance confirmed by the evidence of modern enquiries.

Importance of the astronomer.

Thus in the voyages of the Mortlock Islanders the astronomer was the most important person of the crew. As he alone possessed an accurate knowledge of the relation of the winds and other phenomena to the season of the year, it was for him to determine the time of the voyage; in fact, he was the calendar or almanack of the islanders. At sea he steered by the stars, but not blindly so, for he would shift his course to suit the wind and current. Thus he was astronomer and navigator in one.[1]

Names for stars.

The Mortlock Islanders have native names for at least thirty-three stars or constellations, including the Great Bear, Arcturus, the Pleiades, Orion, Sirius, and the Southern Cross.[2]

Months.

According to Kubary, their calendar comprises twelve months of thirty days each; each month begins with the new moon and is named after the most conspicuous star which is seen to rise at morning or to set at evening at the beginning of the month. The rising of the Pleiades, which give their name (*meriker*) to the eleventh month, is hailed as a good time; and if it passes without any special storms, the people expect unbroken fine weather during the next months.[3]

Points of the compass.

The points of the compass, of which the Mortlock Islanders distinguish thirty-two, are determined by the risings and settings of various constellations; but usually the native astronomer contents himself with the eight principal points, which are also understood in daily life.[4]

Another account of the calendar.

However, a different account of the native calendar is given by Dr. Girschner, whose description applies specially to Namoluk rather than to the Mortlock Islands. According to him, the native months, if we may call them so, have

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 62.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 65 *sq.*

[3] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 63 *sqq.* According to this statement the months are lunar; but there are less than thirty days in a lunar month and more than twelve lunar months in the year. Hence there would seem to have been some confusion either in Kubary's mind or, more probably, in that of his native informant. The exact regulation of the calendar is a problem too difficult for savages, even for savages so comparatively advanced as these islanders. In the St. David's Islands, the most southerly group of the Carolines, Kubary also found a native year of twelve months, each month named after a particular constellation. See J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels* (Leyden, 1895), pp. 107 *sq.*

[4] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 66 *sqq.*

nothing to do with the phases of the moon and are purely determined by the appearance of certain stars at morning above the point where the sun rises. These months, he tells us, are not of uniform length, and the natives distinguish fifteen of them in the solar year.[1] It is possible that the calendar of Namoluk differs in these respects from the calendar of the Mortlock Islands; but that is a question which I have no means of deciding.

Star-lore free from myths.

So far as appears from the reports of it given by our authorities, the star-lore of the Mortlock Islanders is remarkably free from mythical elements. It is an almost purely rational body of knowledge, based on observation and applied correctly and successfully to certain definite practical purposes. As such it is at once an art and a science in embryo.

[1] M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 176 *sq.* At the same time the writer tells us that the Caroline Islanders, "like all Malayo-Polynesian peoples," reckon by the nights of the lunar month, and that they distinguish thirty such nights in the month, each of them called by a special name. He gives a list of the names, which roughly agrees with that of Kubary, though four of the names occur in a slightly different order in the two lists. See M. Girschner, *op. cit.* ii. 174-176; J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 63.

CHAPTER VI

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AMONG THE PONAPEANS

§ 1. *The Island of Ponape*

The Seniavine Archipelago.

THE Seniavine Archipelago is the most easterly group of islands in the Carolines, though still farther to the east lies the solitary island of Kusaie or Ualan. The archipelago consists of a single lofty island and several low islands, all surrounded with coral reefs.[1] The native name of the single high island is now generally given as Ponape, though former authorities endeavoured to render the native pronunciation of the name in a great variety of spellings, such as Bonabee, Bonnybay, Bornabi, Banabe, Banebe, Pouynipet, Pouloupa, Falupet, Fanope, and Faounoupel.[2] The island is one of the largest and most important of the Carolines. Its circumference is estimated at sixty miles, and its area at three hundred and forty square miles. It is of volcanic formation, and the mountains rise to a height of about three thousand feet. A barrier reef surrounds the island on all sides, enclosing a lagoon which varies in width from a mile and a half to three miles. Scattered about the lagoon are more than thirty islets, mostly low and coralline, but a few of volcanic origin. And studded about the lagoon are many patches of live coral, which show white under the surface of the water against the deeper blue of the winding channels. The main island of Ponape is thickly wooded

The island of Ponape.

[1] F. Lutké, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1835–1836), iii. 102; F. J. Moss, *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea* London, 1889), pp. 178 *sq.*

[2] H. Hale, *United States Exploring Expedition, Ethnography and Philology*, p, 81; A. Cheyne, *Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean* (London, 1852), p. 94.

from the peaks of the mountains to the shore and even into the water, where the mangroves flourish. So dense is the vegetation that the voyager in a passing vessel can scarcely discern a house of the hundreds that are scattered round its shores; and were it not for the thin blue smoke curling up from domestic fires, and the canoes gliding with sail or paddle across the calm water of the lagoon, he might well imagine the island to be uninhabited. In its absolute uniformity of dark unbroken green, this luxuriance of vegetation, in spite of its monotony to the eye, lends a peculiar character of softness and restfulness to the scenery. But when the voyager lands and attempts to make his way into the interior of this seemingly enchanted island, he finds his path barred not only by the dense forest, where the trees are woven together by a mantling canopy of vines, but by the great prismatic blocks of basalt with which the shores and the hill-sides are thickly strewn. The interior of the island is indeed an uninhabited and almost impenetrable wilderness of thickly wooded mountains, seamed with deep valleys and ravines. The heavy annual rainfall feeds numerous torrents, which, after rushing down the slopes of the mountains, find a passage, by a network of narrow waterways, through the mangrove swamps at their mouths, into the lagoon. The traveller who succeeds in penetrating the swamp and following up one of these streams for a little way, is rewarded by the richness and variety of the woodland scenery which meets his eye. First, he passes through a region of palms and tree ferns, all interlaced and festooned with ferns, orchids, and creepers of every sort; next, still climbing the mountain slope, he enters forests of fine timber trees; and higher still he comes on open glades or grassy tablelands, well suited for the pasture of cattle. One lake at least, swarming with huge eels, exists among the mountains; others are believed to be hidden away in the depths of the forest. But very little is as yet known about the interior of the island; the natives appear to have a superstitious dread of penetrating these wild and gloomy solitudes.[1]

Character and scenery of the main island.

[1] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 109 *sq.*; *id.* *The Caroline Islands*,

§ 2. *The Ponapeans and their Mode of Life*

Appearance of the Ponapeans.

The natives of Ponape are slightly below the European average in point of stature. Many of the men are large and strongly built, but the prevailing type is that of wiry agility. The women are much smaller than the men, with delicate features and slight figures. The hair of both sexes is jet black, generally quite straight, but often somewhat curly and occasionally very much so. The colour of the skin also varies. The prevailing hue is light copper colour, but some individuals are so very much darker as to suggest an infusion of Melanesian or Negrito blood. Indeed, an English seaman, James O'Connell, who lived five years on the island in the first half of the nineteenth century, declared these darker people to be negroes, and the Russian voyager Lutké compared them to the Papuans, alleging that "they have a wide, flat face, with broad depressed noses, thick lips and crisp hair." According to O'Connell, "the skin is rough, and very unpleasant to the touch," which is said to be a universal characteristic of the Melanesian race. However, this dark Melanesian or Papuan type seems to be exceptional, or at all events peculiar to the lowest or servile class. The general cast of the countenance is pleasing, the eye black, the face regularly shaped, but slightly broader than with us, the nose somewhat heavy, low, and coarse, but seldom repulsive, the mouth rather large, the lips full, the teeth perfect. The lobes of the ears are perforated in both sexes, but are seldom distended to any great size. Both men and women, but especially the women, anoint their bodies with turmeric to give them a whiter appearance, which is esteemed a beauty. The men wear neither beards nor whiskers, and extract such hairs as appear on their faces by means of tweezers, which are, or used to be, made of a pair of cockle-shells or a small piece of tortoise-shell bent double. Both sexes are, or used to be, very handsomely tattooed.[1] Two dialects are spoken

Dark racial type.

Dialects.

pp. 59-61; L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1862*, pp. 176 *sq.*; F. J. Moss, *Through Atolls and Islands in the Great South Sea* (London, 1889), pp. 178-182; F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 549.

[1] F. Lutké, *Voyage autour du Monde*, ii. 25; H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 82 *sq.*; A. Cheyne, *A Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean*, pp. 105 *sq.*; L. H. Gulick, "Micronesia," *op. cit.* pp. 177 *sq.*; F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, p. 62.

among the tribes on the eastern and western coasts of the island respectively. They are mutually intelligible, but each contains many words peculiar to its area, together with a number of minor local variations, mostly vowel changes.[1] On the whole, the differences in speech, in facial features, in the growth of the hair, and in customs, point to a mixture of races in the island.[2]

F. W. Christian on the racial type and language of the people.

On this subject it may be well to quote the evidence of Mr. F. W. Christian, who spent some time on the island and paid close attention to the people and their language. He says: "The Ponapeans, like the rest of their Caroline neighbours, much resemble the Malays of the Philippines and the Sulu archipelago, the Dyaks of Borneo, and the wild hill-tribes of the island of Formosa. It is, however, natural, considering the various streams of population that have swept over the wide Caroline area, that the people of this region should exhibit quite a variety of racial types. Upon Ponape one finds a negrito type amongst the people on the bank of the Palang river, on the south-west coast. Amongst all the tribes of the island I have seen individuals who, if a trifle lighter in colour, might pass for Samoans or Tahitians. The Polynesian element, however, is by no means the most powerful factor in the combination here, though in the Central Carolines, Ruk, and the Mortlocks, it appears much more clearly. It is the sturdy Papuan or Melanesian element, derived from the lands of the south, which we find most strongly marked in Ponape. This influence is seen at work in the very language, wherein we see numerous unmistakable Polynesian words struggling for existence with all their vowel softness ruthlessly squeezed out and twisted into harsh and crabbed vocables. Here the rough and hairy Esau has certainly ousted his smooth-voiced brother and rival." [3]

Food.

The native population of Ponape, which at the beginning of the twentieth century numbered 3200, subsists largely on a vegetable diet, particularly on bread-fruit, bananas, coco-

[1] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 67.

[2] Dr. Hahl, "Mitteilungen über Sitten und rechtliche Verhältnisse auf Ponape," *Ethnologisches Notizblatt*, ii. 2 (Berlin, 1901), p. 1.

[3] F. W. Christian, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 111 *sq.*

nuts, and yams. Indeed, so abundant is the supply of fruits of various sorts that the natives have little need of regular industry, and subsist in great measure on the produce of the trees which were planted by their more numerous and more industrious ancestors. The staple food is the bread-fruit.

Bread-fruit.

The natives preserve quantities of it by slicing up the fruit and burying it in holes lined with banana leaves, where it is said to keep fresh, though far from fragrant, for several years. Their motive for preserving it is to provide against famine; for they have a tradition of a violent hurricane which blew down the trees and caused a great scarcity of food.

Yams.

They cultivate yams to a considerable extent throughout the island, but they are so lazy that they merely make holes in the ground in which they drop the seed, without troubling to dig the surrounding soil. They generally plant the yams near trees, to which they fasten strings to enable the plants to twine round the boles and the branches. The bananas are similarly planted in the woods and not in ground specially prepared for the purpose.

Animal food.

In addition to their vegetable diet the forests yield pigeons and some smaller birds, which are very good for food. On the occasion of a feast, pigs and fowls are added to their bill of fare. The flesh of the dog is highly relished, especially on the eastern coast. Fish and shell-fish form part of their ordinary food. Turtles are set apart for chiefs alone. Eels, whether of the salt or of the fresh water, they will not eat, and hold them in the greatest horror.[1] Kava is drunk at public feasts with great ceremony, the first cup being presented to the highest chief or chief priest, and the other distinctions of rank being carefully observed.[2]

Five independent tribes.

The people of Ponape are divided into five independent tribes, each with its own territory and its own king. The boundaries between the five little states are exactly fixed, even when they run over the tops of the highest mountains. The names of the states are Metalanim on the east coast,

[1] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* pp. 113-115; F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 113; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 73; Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 12. The horror of eating eels is perhaps an effect of religious regard for the creatures rather than of a physical repugnance to them. See below, pp. 147 *sq.*, 151.

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 84; A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* pp. 120 *sq.*

Kiti on the south-west, Chokach (Jokoaj or Jakoy) on the north-west, and Not and U on the north.[1]

In former days these petty kingdoms used to make war on each other, but still they were connected by a certain general system of polity, with which even their wars did not interfere. In case of hostilities the attacking party was bound to send word to the other of the time and place fixed upon for the conflict, in order to allow the enemy to stand on his defence. Conquest was never attempted. The vanquished always retained their lands, the victors contenting themselves with the spoil of the villages. The fruit-trees were never destroyed.[2] Prisoners were often spared, but sometimes offered up in sacrifice to the tribal war-god.[3] Wars.

In fighting, their favourite weapons were slings and spears barbed with the dreaded spine of the sting-ray, but they also made use of bows and arrows. On this subject Mr. Christian remarks that the bow was a weapon not much in favour either in Polynesia or Micronesia. In the Gilbert Islands it was called *bana*, in the Marshall Islands *li-ban*, that is, "the bow (*ban*) of a woman," it being regarded as the weapon of a woman or child. The Malayan form of the name is *panah*. The natives of Ponape say that the bow was used by the Chokalai or dwarf aborigines. It was made of Ixora wood, the bow-string of the bark of the hibiscus, and the arrows of hibiscus wood or reed-grass, tipped with the spine of the sting-ray. Nowadays the weapon is entirely out of use.[4] Its place has been taken by muskets, the introduction of which appears to have tended to diminish both the frequency of wars and the loss of life in battle; for we are informed that the natives are now well aware of the deadly effect of firearms, and live more harmoniously in consequence. For example, in the year 1843 two of the tribes were at war with each other, but deciding that discretion was the better part of valour, both sides kept well Weapons. Bows and arrows.

[1] H. Hale, *op. cit.* pp. 83 *sq.*; A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 108; F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 110; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 61; Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 4. Our authorities differ somewhat as to the forms in which they represent the names of the states or tribes. I follow F. W. Christian.

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 84.

[3] F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 114.

[4] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 136 *sq.*

Peace-making.

out of gunshot and soon afterwards made peace. When one side had had enough of fighting, they used to send some roots of kava, by the hand of a neutral person, to the king of the other side, as a sign that they were willing to make peace. If the overtures were accepted, friendly visits were exchanged between the chiefs of the two tribes, and the memory of past hostilities was drowned in the flowing kava bowl.[1]

Social ranks.

The nobles (*mundjab* or *monjap*) are sharply distinguished from the commoners (*aramach-mal* or *aramaj-mal*) and the serfs (*litu*), these last mostly descended from prisoners of war.[2] Even among the nobles there is a class of inferior nobility (*jau liki*), whom we may call the gentry. Social intercourse between the different ranks is regulated by very strict etiquette. In addressing each other they are bound to use certain words which are unknown in the ordinary language. For instance, in addressing a member of the royal family, if a speaker wished to say "come," he would use the word *kotito*; but in addressing a nobleman he would say *apeto*, and in addressing a commoner he would say *koto*. A special ceremonial is observed when the kings meet together; on such occasions they exhaust the possible forms of politeness. Of the five kings, the monarch of Metalanim, the district in which the famous megalithic ruins are situated, ranks highest. The king nominates the great dignitaries of state from his own family, and the nomination is for life, but it is by no means arbitrary; unless the king is a man of unusual determination of character, he is bound to accept the advice of his councillors. On the death of a great dignitary all the rest usually get a step upwards, and the king appoints the new man and assigns him an estate, in which he henceforth resides. At the head of the nobility is the Prime Minister, whose title is *Nanekin* or *Nannikan*. Though he can never be raised to the throne, yet he generally

Ceremonial language.

The kings.

The Prime Minister.

[1] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 120.

[2] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 83; F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 114; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 325; Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 4. According to Hale, whose report was based on the evidence of the English seaman James O'Connell, the names of the three social classes were *Moonjobs* (*Mūndjab*), *Jerejohs* (*Tsherīdjo*), and *Nigurts* (*Naikat*), and the general name applied to the two first classes was *aroche* (*arōtç*).

holds the reins of power in his own hands, while the king enjoys only the empty honours of royalty. Thus the Prime Ministers in Ponape would appear to be to the kings what the Mayors of the Palace were in France to the monarchs of the Merovingian dynasty, the real rulers of the country masquerading as ministers beside mere puppet sovereigns. In Ponape, however, the monarchy is not hereditary; the king is chosen by the great dignitaries, of whom the next in rank usually succeeds to the throne. The king-elect must be in possession of a whole series of state secrets: he must know the sacred stones in certain places on which he is bound to sit; he must understand the sacred words and prayers of the religious ritual, and after his election he must recite this litany at the holy stones. Like his ministers, he must wear his hair long, and he must walk with a staff. When he is sick, kava is drunk before his house, and the gods are entreated to save the king's life. His death is kept secret from the people. Only the members of his family and the highest dignitaries are informed of it. The body is buried secretly and as quickly as possible, generally by night, and the new king is at once appointed.[1] The greatest marks of respect are paid to the king by all classes; even the nobles are not allowed to stand upright in his presence; to shed blood within the precincts of the palace is a capital offence. As soon as the bread-fruit season sets in, the nobles send the firstfruits as a present to the king; and whenever a chief has had a new turtle or fishing net made, he is bound to make over to the king all the fish caught in it for several days, before he is free to appropriate any of the catch to his own use.[2]

The monarchy elective.

"Counted equal to the nobles were the two religious bodies, the *Chaumaro* or high priests, and the *Laiap* or priests of the second order. These were of great weight and importance in the land, and united the functions of doctor, magician, rain-maker, and diviner of the future. Theirs was the knowledge of medicinal herbs and poisons, the gift of *Kapakap* or prophecy, of the *Macha-kilang* or second sight,

The priests.

[1] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* pp. 4-6. Compare A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* pp. 108 *sq.* According to Mr. Christian (in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 114) there were twelve orders of chiefs, of which the lowest bore the title of *Chaulik*.

[2] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 110.

the interpretation of dreams and omens, and the dreaded power of *Ria* or imprecation of curses. Upon them devolved the ordering of court ceremonies and public festivals, and the seasonable invocation of the gods of rain and harvest, the staving off of famine and all calamities, public and private, and the maintenance of the *Charaui* or Tabu. Theirs were the principal seats upon the *Lempantam* or high stone platform in the *Nach* or Council Lodge—theirs, next to the king's, the best portion of cooked food and kava upon the days of solemn festival."[1]

Adoption.

The adoption of children, even in the lifetime of their parents, is general or universal, and forms a complicated chain of relationships.[2]

Mutilation of males.

Young men on reaching marriageable age are subjected to a severe mutilation called *lelek*; it consists in the excision of one of the testicles, usually the one on the right side.[3] The object of this singular operation is not mentioned, and is difficult to divine, though no doubt it is deemed in some sort a preparation for marriage. Men and women are tattooed on the arms and legs, but not on the face; those who are not tattooed are not permitted to marry.[4]

Sexual freedom before marriage.

Both sexes are allowed complete freedom of intercourse before marriage, and avail themselves of it without the least feeling of shame or the least reproach on the part of their relations.

Marriage customs.

After marriage the women are obliged to be more guarded in their conduct, as infidelity would be severely punished by the husband.[5] The suitor serves for his wife in the house of his future father-in-law, and frequently has his pains for nothing. The marriage ceremony is somewhat singular. The girl is brought into the house and sits down, while her future mother-in-law rubs coco-nut oil vigorously into her back and shoulders. This is called *Keieti* or Anointing. A garland of flowers is placed on her head, and the ceremony is concluded by a

[1] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 325 sq.; *id.*, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 114 *sq.*

[2] F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 113; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 74; Dr Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 9.

[3] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 74; compare Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 11. According to the latter writer the name of the custom is *uiakapt*.

[4] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 74; Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 11.

[5] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* pp. 117 *sq.*; Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 10.

feast. But before the anointing takes place, the bride must signify her acceptance of the bridegroom by partaking of food offered her by his relations in presence of the assembled family. The marriage bond may be severed at any time at the will of either party. The men for the most part content themselves with a single wife, polygamy being a privilege only of the wealthy and powerful chiefs. Exchange of wives (*peichipal*) between friends and relations is occasionally practised.[1]

The levirate and sororate.

When a man dies, his widow marries his brother, if he had one; when a wife dies, the widower must marry her sister, if she had one. In other words, the natives practise both the levirate and the sororate.[2] First cousins are not allowed to marry each other.[3]

Sexual liberties of the king and nobles.

The king has the right of summoning any woman to his bed by sending her a vessel of oil; and a similar privilege is accorded to the great dignitaries in respect of women of the common folk; the husband has no right to resist. Women of noble families may in like manner contract temporary connexions at pleasure with commoners.[4]

§ 3. *Totemism and Exogamy.*

Totemism and exogamy with maternal descent of the clan.

The natives of Ponape, without distinction of tribe or district, are divided into a series of exogamous clans; hence no man is allowed to marry a woman of his own clan, but is bound to look for his wife in another. Descent of the clan is in the maternal line; in other words, a man belongs to the clan of his mother, not to that of his father. Each clan has its own name and its own totem, which is an animal, generally a fish, and the members of the clan believe that they are descended from the animal. They even call such animals "mothers"; they regard them as sacred and

[1] F. W. Christian, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 113, 114; *id.*, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 73 *sq.*; Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* pp. 10 *sq.*

[2] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 119. According to Dr. Hahl (*op. cit.* p. 11), a widow may have commerce only with the relations of her deceased husband, among whom his brothers have the first claim; but this claim they can renounce in return for a payment. This modified form of the levirate may be a modern innovation; the original form of the custom is probably that reported by Cheyne.

[3] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 119.

[4] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 11.

may not injure them. In honour of them they hold great dances, at which prayers are offered. He who should kill his totemic animal would be despised and punished; and, moreover, he would incur the vengeance of the offended deity; blindness is believed to be the usual consequence of the ill-treatment of the totem. However, incantations and medicines may help to avert the natural effect of the crime.[1] The native name for clan is *tipu* or *tupu*, also *chou-tapa*.[2] Among the totems of the clans are the eel, the shark, the cuttlefish,[3] the sting-ray, the blue heron, the native owl, and the boatswain bird.[4] For example, in the district of Pelikar, in the north-western part of the island, there is a clan called Tipenway, the members of which have the sting-ray for their totem. They treat the fish with great respect and will not kill it; if at ebb-tide they find a sting-ray stranded on the shore, they replace it in deep water. Formerly, when a member of the clan died, his friends used to pour coco-nut milk on the water as an offering to sting-rays, perhaps because they thought that the soul of the deceased had taken up its abode in a sting-ray. Hence the coast of Pelikar swarms with sting-rays.[5] Descent of property, as well as of the clan, runs in the maternal line; a man's first heirs are the children of his sisters.[6]

§ 4. *Funeral Rites*

Funeral rites.

The funeral ceremonies in Ponape appear to have undergone some change since the natives came into contact with Europeans. Formerly the bodies of their dead were wrapped in mats and kept in their houses for a considerable time, but latterly the people have adopted the custom of burying their dead in the ground. On the death of a chief, or any person of note, the female friends of the deceased congregate for a certain number of days, and express their

[1] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* pp. 9, 10 (where *Missachtung des Toten* is a misprint for *Missachtung des Totem*); compare F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 74, 324 *sq.*; *id.* in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 113 *sq.*

[2] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 324.

[3] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 10.

[4] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 324.

[5] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 122 note.

[6] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 9.

grief by loud and melancholy wailings during the day and by dancing at night. All the relations of the departed cut their hair short in token of mourning.[1] When the corpse has been coffined, prayers are offered to a sacred stone, and the stone is placed on the coffin for the repose of the soul. A fire is kept up on the grave for four days, in order that the ghost of the dead man may warm himself at it. The relations prepare oil for the deceased and set it on the grave; and they hang food on scaffolds hard by. They gather and sit in silence before the grave, waiting for some token from the deceased. A bird, a beetle, a butterfly, or any other living creature flying across the grave is accepted by them as the sign for which they looked. Then they begin the wailing and keep it up till they separate. But after a time the young men and women of the clan meet under the leadership of a chief and hold a festival in honour of the departed. A coco-nut filled with oil is hung over a fire, and love scenes are enacted, until the leader pours the contents of the shell into the flames.[2] If the deceased was a man, the paddle of his canoe is buried with him; if the deceased was a woman, her spindle or distaff is interred with her. Over the grave a coco-nut palm is planted, the fruit of which is seldom, if ever, disturbed; and besides the paddle buried with the body, they sometimes lay one or more on the ground near the grave.[3] The natives are most unwilling to mention the name of a dead ancestor; hence among them it is difficult or impossible to obtain such elaborate genealogies of families as were handed down by oral tradition in some branches of the Polynesian race, such as the Maoris and the Marquesans.[4]

Names of the dead not mentioned.

§ 5. *The Fate of the Soul after Death*

The attentions bestowed by the natives on their dead sufficiently testify to a belief in the survival of the soul after

Belief in the survival of the soul after death.

[1] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 119.

[2] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* pp. 3 *sq.* The writer does not describe the nature of the love scenes, but hints that they are sometimes indecent ("*Man . . . feiert Liebesscenen, bei denen es selbst unanständig hergehen soll,*" p. 4).

[3] H. Hale, *op. cit.* p. 84.

[4] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 74 *sq.*; *id.*, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 114.

death, and reveal a desire on the part of the survivors to minister to the comfort of their departed friend. The paddle buried with the dead or laid on the grave may have been originally intended to help the deceased to paddle his canoe to the land of the dead, which many of the Pacific islanders place somewhere in the West, across a wide waste of heaving waters. However, at present the natives of Ponape conceive the region of departed spirits or *pajit* as they call it, to be situated under the sea. There abundance reigns, and the souls of the dead lead a happy life. But in the spirit land there is also a bad place, called *pueliko*. Yet good or bad conduct in this life has nothing whatever to do with the fate of the soul in the other world. The soul must cross a bridge which leads from this world to the next. The bridge is called *kan kaper*, that is, the Dancing Bridge. On it stand watchmen, in the likeness of fiends, ready to hurry away the soul to the dismal region, the Ponapean hell. At the sight of them the soul begins to dance, and so intent are the watchmen on marking the capers cut by the ghost, that they forget their duty, and the wily dancer slips by them into the place of bliss. But if the ghost cannot dance, there is no help for it but he is dragged away to the place of woe.[1] Thus, according to the Ponapean creed, the best qualification for an eternity of bliss in the life hereafter is to be a good dancer, and a dancing-master is the fittest person to be entrusted with the cure of souls.

The region of departed spirits.

Another account of Ponapean eschatology.

An earlier account of Ponapean eschatology is given by Captain Andrew Cheyne, a sailor who visited and described the islanders about the middle of the nineteenth century. As his account differs from the preceding in detail, while it agrees with it in substance, I will quote it in full. He says: "The religion of these people is very simple. They have neither images nor temples, and, although they believe in a future state, they do not appear to have any religious observances. They believe in the immortality of the soul, and that their Elysium is surrounded by a wall, having a bottomless ditch around it. The gate is guarded by an old woman, whom the spirit has to encounter in jumping across the ditch, and who attempts to throw it into this dark abyss.

[1] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 4.

Should it, however, master the woman, and gain an entrance through the gate, it is for ever happy; but should the woman succeed in throwing it into the ditch, it sinks into an abyss of eternal misery." [1]

Paradise and Tartarus.

The division of the Ponapean world beyond the grave into a region of bliss and a region of woe is mentioned also by Mr. Christian. He says: "In their mythology they have a submarine Paradise (*Pachet*), a place of perpetual feasting amongst lovely sights and sweet odours. They also have a subterranean Tartarus (*Pueliko*) of mire, cold and darkness, guarded by two grim female forms (Lichar and Licher), one holding a glittering sword, the other a blazing torch." [2]

§ 6. *Religion*

Religion: worship of ancestors and reverence for animals.

Of Ponapean religion in general we possess no full and accurate account. The two features in it which appear to have struck European observers most forcibly are the worship of ancestors and that reverence for certain animals, and particularly for fish, which is doubtless connected with their totemic system. Thus the American ethnologist, Horatio Hale, whose informant, the English sailor James O'Connell, had spent five years among the islanders, reports on their religion as follows: "Their worship is very simple. It consists in prayers and invocations addressed to the spirits (*hani* or *ani*) of departed chiefs. They have neither temples, idols, nor offerings. Certain animals, also, particularly fish, are esteemed sacred among them—some as eels, being so to the whole people, while others are merely prohibited to particular families. O'Connell supposes this to proceed from some rude system of metempsychosis, connected with their religious belief." [3]

F. W. Christian on Ponapean religion.

The same two elements in the religion of the natives are emphasized by a later enquirer, Mr. F. W. Christian. He says: "The worship of the *Ani* or deified ancestors, coupled with a sort of zoolatry or totemism, is the backbone of the

[1] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 121.
[2] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 75.
[3] H. Hale, *United States Exploring Expedition, Ethnography and Philology*, p. 84.

Ponapean faith. Every village, every valley, hill, or stream has its *genius loci*, every family its household god, every clan its presiding spirit, every tribe its tutelary deity. Thunder, lightning, rain, storm, wind, fishing, planting, war, festival, harvest, famine, birth, disease, death, all these events and phenomena have their supernatural patron or Master-spirit. The gloomy fancy of the Ponapean peoples the swamp, the reef, the mountain, and the hanging woods of the inland wilderness with hosts of spirits, some beneficent, the greater part malignant. All these *Ani* are honoured under the guise of some special bird, fish, or tree in which they are supposed to reside, and with which they are identified. These they style their *Tan-waar*, literally *canoe*, *vehicle*, or *medium* (like the *Vaa* or *Vaka* of the Polynesians, the *Huaca* or *Vaka* of the Peruvians). Thus the chestnut tree is the medium of the god of thunder, the blue starfish of the god of rain, the shark of the god of war, and the *Lukot* or native owl the emblem of the fairy Li-Ara-Katau, one of the local genii of the east coast."[1]

Spirits of dead chiefs worshipped.

On the other hand, in his account of Ponapean religion, Captain Cheyne lays all the stress on the worship of ancestors, overlooking entirely the worship of nature or what we may call the totemic element. He writes: "Their prayers are usually addressed to the spirit of some deceased chief, petitioning it to grant them success in fishing, an abundant crop of bread-fruit and yams; and praying for the arrival of ships, and a bountiful supply of the good things of this life. The priests pretend to foretell future events, and the people put much faith in their predictions. The natives believe that they get inspired by the spirit of some deceased chief; and that whatever they may say while labouring under the agitation into which they work themselves is dictated by the spirit; and that such prophecies will be sure to come to pass. Should any of their predictions, however, not happen to correspond, they will cunningly pretend that some other spirit has interfered and prevented it."[2]

A somewhat fuller account of Ponapean theology has

[1] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 75; *id.*, in *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) p. 115.

[2] A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 121.

been given by Dr. Hahl, who was for a time Vice-Governor of the island under German rule. He tells us that at present, or at least under his governorship, which fell at the beginning of the twentieth century, almost all the natives are nominal Christians, but the supreme god Tokota still receives his old worship, and the spirits of the dead still inspire the same fear as of old.[1] The original seat of the religion, he informs us, was Kiti, the district on the south-west coast of the island. The supreme god Tokota, or Taukatau, as the name is also pronounced, is believed to dwell in the sky, and under him are other three divinities, named Nanjapa, Nanjarai, and Nantuainin. Together the four are called the Heavenly Spirits, because their home is in the sky. They are considered the gods of the great natural forces; in particular, they rule the wind and the rain, the thunder and the lightning. Independent of them are the Earth Spirits (*ani puelepuel*), who are numerous and of many different sorts. Prayers are not offered to all of them; the priest of Tokota has nothing to do with them. Under them also are included those spirits of the departed who can find no rest after death. Their influence on mankind is thought to be on the whole beneficent. Often particular families claim special spirits (*ani*) as their patron deities. The names of these spirits may only be mentioned in prayers.[2]

Dr. Hahl on Ponapean theology.

The supreme god Tokota.

The Heavenly Spirits.

The Earth Spirits.

A long list of the gods of Ponape is given by Mr. Christian. It includes deities both of natural phenomena and of human activities, many of whom have their sacred animals in which, apparently, they are supposed to be incarnate. Thus there are gods of the sugar-cane, of the coco-nut palm, and of the bread-fruit tree, of kava, of the reef, of the morasses and salt marshes, of famine, of house-building, and of canoe-building and carpentry. There is also a goddess of the moon, called Ina maram, but apparently no god of the sun. Some of the gods combine various functions; for example, the god of the bread-fruit tree is also the god of the rain. Similarly the god of

Gods of Ponape and their sacred animals.

[1] Dr. Hahl, "Mitteilungen über Sitten und rechtliche Verhältnisse auf Ponape," *Ethnologisches Notizblatt*, ii. 2 (Berlin, 1901), p. 12.

[2] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* pp. 1 *sq.*

festivals, Nan-ul-lap, is believed at the same time to rule all the contingencies of birth, sickness, death, and good and bad luck; to him the turtle and various sorts of fish are sacred. The god of canoe-building and carpentry, named Nan-chelang, is incarnate in a green and yellow tree-lizard, which bears the same name as the god. The god of the morasses and salt marshes is thought to dwell in the body of the blue heron. A woodland nymph or goddess, called Li-ara-Katau, has for her emblem the native owl. Other deities seem to be directly identified with animals. Such are Li-kant-en-kap, the sting-ray, and Nan-kieil-ilil-mau, the god of the *kieil*, which is a large black lizard with red spots, of a savage disposition.[1] Besides these divinities may be mentioned Luk or Luka lapalap, the prince of evil; he or his namesake is said to have flown over the face of the seas, bidding the lands arise and giving the names to trees and plants.[2] Lastly, we may notice the trolls or dwarf goblins called Chokalai, which dwell in the interior of the island or in little holes in the ground; they are said to be independent of the great god Tokota and to do harm to mankind, for example, by causing racking pains of the joints and limbs. Mr. Christian would see in them a tradition of dwarf Negrito hill-tribes, which were gradually exterminated by the early Malay settlers.[3]

Luk, the prince of evil.

Dwarf goblins.

Sacred stones.

The natives have a tradition that certain heavenly spirits called Ijo en long came down from the sky and were turned into stones. At the present day sacred stones, whether these heaven-descended stones or others, play a great part in the religious worship of the people, which, indeed, cannot be properly conducted without them, for only through their mediation can prayers be addressed to the gods.[4] The personal intermediaries between gods and men are the priests. The offering of prayers is preceded by the drinking of kava, which is passed round among the worshippers. The ceremony is accompanied by the beating of the sacred

[1] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 381-384.

[2] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 383.

[3] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 382; Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 2, who gives the name of the goblins as Jokala. In general, Dr. Hahl seems to render the sound of the English *ch* by *j*.

[4] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 2.

drum and the singing of old songs couched in a language quite different from that of the present day. Dogs are commonly sacrificed. The priests lay the business in hand before the sacred stones, mentioning the particular divinity to which the stones are expected to make application ; thus prompted, the stones transmit the prayers to the deity. The miraculous virtue of the stones manifests itself in many other ways. Mere contact with them exerts a salutary and magical influence. For example, to dip one of them in the sea is an approved method of ensuring a good catch of fish. The lore of the gods is kept strictly secret and handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation. The proper successor of the priestly sage is his daughter's husband. Only when there are no daughters, or the family is in danger of becoming extinct, are the sacred mysteries communicated to sons. Hence it happens that in priestly families the succession to office sometimes runs in the paternal as well as in the more usual maternal line. The priests form a corporation, with rules of succession to office which are strictly observed. In former times they had the right of supplying vacancies in their body. At present the appointment is in the hands of the king, who elects the new priest from one of the families which are still in possession of the ancient secret lore. These families are not noble, but their knowledge of divine things confers on them a special distinction. The highest in rank of all the priestly dignitaries is the priest of the great god Tokota.[1]

The priests and their secret lore.

[1] Dr. Hahl, *op. cit.* p. 3.

CHAPTER VII

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AMONG THE NATIVES OF YAP

§ 1. *The Island of Yap*

The island of Yap.

THE island of Yap, Uap, or Eap is the most westerly, and one of the largest, of the Caroline archipelago. It is situated in about 9° North latitude, and extends roughly north and south for a length of ten or eleven nautical miles, with an extreme breadth of about seven miles. The island is of volcanic formation, but is surrounded by a coral reef some thirty-five miles long and varying in width from three to five miles. Towards the north the island is nearly cut in two by inlets of the sea, which penetrate deeply into the land, and are only separated from each other by the isthmus of Girrigir. The southerly of these inlets provides a good harbour in Tomil Bay. In the north and central parts of the island there is a range of low hills, not exceeding a thousand feet in height, the slopes of which distribute the rain-water to the low-lying districts. Rivulets are very few, and in time of drought the supply of water runs short. The island is surrounded by a belt of coco-nut palms about half a mile in width, and on the seaward side of this belt groves of mangroves extend into the salt water. Timber is scarce, and in consequence the natives are obliged to have their canoes built on the Pelew Islands, which they frequently visit.[1]

[1] A. Cheyne, *A Description of Islands in the Western Pacific Ocean* (London, 1852), pp. 142 *sq.*; F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 234 *sq.*; *id.*, "Exploration in the Caroline Islands," *The Geographical Journal*, xiii. (1899) pp. 128 *sq.*; W. H. Furness, *The Island of Stone*

§ 2. *The Natives of Yap and their Mode of Life*

In the early years of the twentieth century the population of Yap numbered between five and six thousand. The natives are of the perplexing type generally known as Micronesian, which covers a multitude of variations. In Micronesia, as I have already had occasion to point out, the natives of each island or group of islands have certain physical features in common with those of other islands; but on the other hand there are such differences in language, in customs, and in mode of life that it is well-nigh impossible to say, with any degree of certainty, what or whence is the parent stock or predominant race. In these respects the Micronesians present a striking contrast to their kinsfolk the Polynesians, who are characterized by a remarkable homogeneity of physical type, of language, of customs, and of religion. With regard to the people of Yap in particular, observers seem to agree that they approximate to the Malayan type. The colour of their skin is that of a light coffee; their hair is black and inclined to wave or curl, but is not frizzly like that of the Melanesians; their eyes are very dark brown, almost black; their cheek bones are rather high, and their noses, though not prominent, tend to be hooked. They are not so tall nor, on an average, so strongly built as the natives of Tahiti, Samoa, and Fiji. Since the sale of intoxicants and gunpowder has been prohibited, they are gentle, docile, and lazy; formerly, under the very lax rule of Spain, they were exceedingly troublesome, made frequent raids on Spanish and German traders, and perpetually waged internecine war on each other.[1]

Physical type of the people.

Money, Uap of the Carolines (Philadelphia and London, 1910), p. 16. The island of Yap and its natives, with their customs and traditionary lore, are described in great detail by Dr. W. Müller in an elaborate and well-illustrated monograph (*Yap*, Hamburg, 1917–1918), which forms part of *Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition, 1908–1909*, herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. G. Thilenius (Hamburg, L. Friedrichsen & Co., 1917). Dr. W. Müller spent nearly ten months in Yap in 1909–1910.

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 17 *sq.* According to Mr. Christian (*The Caroline Islands*, p. 234), "The folk apparently belong to the Malay race, with a Dravidian substratum, and a slight mixture of Polynesian." Elsewhere (p. 52) Mr. Christian observes that the natives of Yap are "very much darker than the light brown folk of Polynesia." In 1911 the population was 6187. See W. Müller, *Yap* (Hamburg, 1917–1918), p. 10.

Houses.

The native houses are of oblong shape, solidly built of bread-fruit and callophyllum wood; the walls are made of light canes bound in rows with cords of coco-nut fibre; every beam and stanchion is mortised to its fellow and bound with innumerable lashings of coco-nut twine; not a nail is used and scarcely a peg. The gable roof is thatched with nipa palm and pandanus leaves, and overhangs so as almost to touch the floor, excluding all light and air except such as penetrate through the doorway. There is always an inner room or corner, screened off from the rest, where the owners of the house sleep at night. The houses are always built on platforms, some two or three feet high, constructed of massive blocks of coral. In houses of the better sort this stone platform is long and broad, and serves as an open verandah on at least three sides of the building.[1] During the whole time that a house and the stone platform on which it rests are building, the builder and the magician concerned with the construction are obliged to observe sexual continence.[2]

Men's club-houses.

A very notable feature in the social life of the natives of Yap is presented by the men's large club-houses, one at least of which is to be found in every village. The name of the club-house varies, curiously enough, according as it is situated on the coast or inland. A club-house standing on the coast is called a *failu*; a club-house standing inland, beyond the belt of coco-nut groves, is called a *pabai*. Such club-houses pertain exclusively to the men, be they married or single; there councils are held and the affairs of the community are discussed without the intervention of women; there, too, men and boys entertain themselves with song and dance in which it would not be decorous for women to join. A club-house is often years in building. When, after long and fitful labour, one of these edifices is completed, a feast is held and dances performed in front of the building. Everybody, including even the women, is invited to the ceremony; the house is then given a name, and a new fire is started in the fireplace by the friction of wood, the apparatus employed

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 22-25; A. Cheyne, *op. cit.* p. 143; F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 235.

[2] W. Müller, *Yap* (Hamburg, 1917–1918), p. 153.

being the primitive one known as the fire-drill. Henceforth the club-house belongs exclusively to men, and no woman, with a single exception, may set foot in it.[1] The single exception is a very remarkable one, as we shall see presently.

Seclusion of fishermen in the club-houses.

During the fishing season every fisherman, so long as he plies his craft, lies under a very strict taboo; he is obliged to live apart from his wife and family even during the intervals which he passes on shore. Hence an important use of the men's club-house is to provide a retreat where the tabooed fishermen may live in seclusion free from the danger of intercourse with women. After three or four days and nights of hard work on the open sea, outside of the lagoon, the fishermen return to the club-house to rest, to distribute their haul of fish, and to repair any damages which their boats or nets may have sustained. During these brief seasons of needful repose, not a fisherman dare leave the club-house or, under any pretext whatsoever, visit his own house; he may not so much as look on the face of a woman, even if she be his own mother, wife, or daughter; though to this rule also there is a single exception, which I will notice later on. If a heedless fisherman, thus secluded, were to steal but a glance at a woman, it is believed that flying fish would infallibly peck out his eyes at night. During their imprisonment, for such it is, in the club-house the fishermen are not allowed to go farther into the interior than the inland side of the house, and should their mothers, wives, or daughters bring them any gift, or desire to talk with them, the women must stand down near the shore, with their backs turned toward the house; then the men may go out and speak to them, or, with their backs turned to the women, receive what has been brought, after which they return at once to their prison. Even within the club-house the fishermen may not join with the other men in song or dance, but must preserve silence and keep strictly apart. Mr. Furness once visited one of these club-houses immediately after the fishermen had returned. He found the whole interior aspect of the house changed. More than two-thirds of the floor was partitioned off into little stalls or

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 36-38.

pens made of matting of green coco-nut fronds, with the leaves interwoven. Inside each little pen sat an imprisoned fisherman, the sides of the pen being just low enough to permit of his peeping over the top ; if he lay down, he was completely concealed from view. The whole floor presented the appearance of a gigantic wasps' nest with every cell-cap off and demure grubs just sticking their heads out of their cells.[1]

Seclusion of fishermen elsewhere in the Caroline Islands.

This seclusion of fishermen from their families, and especially from their wives, appears to be a general custom in the Caroline Islands. Thus on Lamotrek, one of the Central Carolines, fishermen sleep apart from their wives for four days before a fishing expedition, and when they have come ashore and landed their first catch and the distribution of fish begins, if any women or children come near the heap of fish and break the taboo by helping themselves, it is believed that they will be punished with swollen ankles or elephantiasis as a visible token of the anger of the spirits.[2] Again, in the Morileu Islands, another group of the Central Carolines, every man who intends to go a-fishing must, according to the established custom, prepare himself for the work by abstaining from all commerce with his wife for the eight or nine preceding days, and he must pass the interval in the common house assigned to the use of unmarried men. This law is, or used to be, enforced with the utmost rigour ; any man who should have received the least favour from a woman would be obliged to comply with it, or to renounce his share in the fishing expedition, if he would not, according to the common belief, run the risk of incurring the most dangerous maladies, in particular, swellings of the legs. Any man who should seek to evade the law would be denounced by the women, who would ridicule him and brand him with the title of *manabour*, a word of which the signification appears to be unknown. The law goes the length of forbidding a man who has been with his wife to touch the fishing-tackle for twenty-four hours afterwards.[3]

In every club-house of the men there live one, two,

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 38-45.

[2] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 239.

[3] F. Lutké, *Voyage autour du Monde* (Paris, 1835–1836), iii. 168 *sq.*

three, or four unmarried girls, who act for a time as the common, but temporary, wives of all the men who frequent the house. Such a temporary wife is called a *mespil* or *mispil*. She must always be of a different clan from that of the men; for, as we shall see presently, the natives are divided into exogamous clans, and consequently no man may marry a woman of his own clan. A *mespil* should always be stolen by force or cunning from a district at some distance from that in which her captors reside. But it is also lawful to purchase slave girls from neighbouring districts to serve in the club-house. After she has been fairly, or unfairly, captured or purchased and installed in her new home, she loses no shade of respect among her own people; on the contrary, she rather rises in their estimation, for have not her beauty and worth received the highest possible attestation in the devotion, not of one, but of a whole community of lovers? Unlike a prophet, it is in her own country and among her own kith and kin that she is held in honour. But in the community where she dwells as an alien her social rank is gone. None of the matrons of the district in which she resides will have any social intercourse with her. By the men, on the other hand, whether in the club-house or out of it, she is invariably treated with every consideration and respect; no unseemly actions may take place in her presence, and all coarse language is scrupulously avoided when she is within hearing; nevertheless, in virtue of her station, she is permitted to hear and see the songs and dances from which other women are debarred. If she exhibits a preference for any one out of her many lovers, no blame attaches to her, but the favourite receives a hint that, in the opinion of the whole house, he must either retire or perhaps leave the club-house for a while and live with friends in another district.[1]

Common wives or mistresses (*mespils*) in the men's club-houses.

In dress the *mespil* is in no way distinguished from other women, except by tattoo marks on her hands and legs.[2] Her food and her luxuries, such as tobacco and betel-nut, are supplied by the men, and she is never required to work

Mode of life of the *mespils*.

[1] W. H. Furness, *The Island of Stone Money*, pp. 46 *sq.*; F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 290-292; W. Müller, *Yap* (Hamburg, 1917–1918), pp. 232 *sq.*

[2] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 54.

in the taro fields, as are the wives and daughters of the district. At some distance, in the bush behind the club-house, a little hut is built for her sole use whenever she wishes to be secluded; here she spends her time in making new skirts for herself of leaves, and during her sojourn in the hut, which is called a *tapal*, the men sedulously place her food hard by, but dare not take so much as a single step within the enclosure.[1]

The men of the club-house treat their *mespils* with far more respect and devotion than the married men generally show to their wives. On their side these young women are absolutely faithful to the men of their club-house, regarding themselves as unquestionable property, having been sought and captured at the risk of men's lives, and paid for withal in costly pieces of stone money. They are by no means kept prisoners; as soon as the excitement over their capture in their own village has abated, they are at full liberty to return home and visit their family and friends, and they always return willingly to the club-house.[2]

Abduction of *mespils*.

In ancient times, when there were many districts constantly at war with each other, the capture of a *mespil* was always accompanied by bloodshed and followed by enduring feuds; but nowadays, lacking the means of intoxicating themselves, and all regarding themselves as one people (with the exception of the tribe of slaves called *Pimlingai*), they look on the capture of a young girl to fill the office of *mespil* as little more than a commonplace burglary; nay, the abduction is almost always secretly arranged beforehand with the chief of the district, inasmuch as it is to him that the parents of the abducted damsel appeal for redress. Moreover, being fully assured that the captors are prepared to pay a good round sum in shell money and stone money by way of indemnity, he is content to wink at the capture and to salve, with the bribe received, the wounded pride of the bereaved family, and so to dispel all thoughts of a bloody retaliation. Nevertheless, the whole proceeding is still conducted, for the sake of decency, with the greatest possible secrecy and stealth.[3] The Catholic priests, for the most

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 48, 54.

[2] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 48 *sq.*

[3] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 49 *sq.*

part, sternly set their faces against the whole institution, but all in vain. "It is the custom of the land," says the obstinate heathen, and goes his own way.[1]

Seclusion of women at menstruation.

Girls at puberty and women at menstruation are obliged to retire to little huts erected for their use in the wilderness. There the girls must remain for a whole year, during which they act as *mespils* or public women, receiving their numerous lovers by night in the hut. The only check on the freedom of their intercourse is the rule that they may not grant their favours to men who have the same totem as themselves. In this free year of a girl's life public opinion sees nothing in the least improper. Among her paramours the damsel commonly finds an opportunity to select her future husband.[2]

Seclusion of women at childbirth.

A woman who has given birth to a child must in like manner retire, immediately after her delivery, to a small hut erected for her use in a solitary place. There she must remain for nine days if the child is her firstborn; but for subsequent births the period of seclusion is shortened to five days. The hut in the wilderness where she lives secluded for these days is called a *dapal*; it would seem to be the same with the hut where women stay at their monthly periods.[3]

§ 3. *Totemism and Exogamy*

Totemism and exogamy.

The natives of Yap are divided into clans which are exogamous and totemic, with descent of the clan and of the totem in the maternal line. In other words, every clan has a totem; no man may marry or have sexual intercourse with a woman of the same clan as himself, and children belong to the clan and take the totem of their mother, not of their father. Nobody cares about his father's totem. The totems are fish, marine animals, land animals, trees, and plants. In the great majority of cases the name of the totem is also the name of the clan, and the members of

[1] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, p. 291.

[2] S. Walleser, "Religiöse Anschauungen und Gebräuche von Jap (Deutsche Südsee)," *Anthropos*, viii. (1913) pp. 622 *sq.*, 1051 *sq.* As to the uncleanness and compulsory retirement of women at menstruation, compare W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 228.

[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 622 *sq.*; compare W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 153. According to the latter writer, the woman retires to the hut, not after the birth, but at the first symptoms of labour. He calls the hut a *tapal*.

Respect for totems.

the clan believe that they are descended from their totem, whether animal, fish, tree, or plant. If a man's totem is an animal or fish, he may not kill or eat it; if it is a tree, he may not eat the fruit or burn the wood. A man who should disregard these prohibitions and eat his totem would be ranked in public opinion as a cannibal.[1] Thus the inhabitants of Yap have totemism of the most regular and orthodox pattern.

§ 4. *The Doctrine of the Soul*

Native conception of the soul.

The natives of Yap conceive of the soul (*ya'al*) as an invisible body dwelling within the visible body and resembling it in form exactly. The soul is thus a faithful image of the body. This primitive conception of the soul is perhaps the principal reason which leads many natives to identify a person's soul with his likeness. Hence when any mischievous spirit of the sea catches a man's reflection in the water, the man must die, because the spirit has robbed him of his soul. For the same reason many old women on the island are afraid to be photographed, and one native expression for photographing is *fek ya'al*, "to take away the soul." The native entertains a similar opinion concerning animals and lifeless things; they too, in his opinion, have souls. The dead can take away the things that have been deposited with him in the grave, because he carries off their shadow-picture (*fon*). Hence the native expression for photographing lifeless things is *fek fon*, "to take away their shadow-picture." The spirit (*an'i*) has its seat in the invisible body or soul (*ya'al*). It is in possession of memory and the power of thought (*tafinai* or *tafenai*). In dreams the spirit (*an'i*) of a man walks abroad and sees then many things by which it can foretell the future. The general interpretation of dreams in Yap, as in some civilized countries, is by contraries. If a man dreams that he is happy, trouble is in store for him; if, on the contrary, he dreams of trouble, he may expect good fortune. The serious importance which

Dreams.

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 609. As to totemism in Yap, see further, W. Müller, *Yap* (Hamburg, 1917–1918), pp. 216 *sqq.* Among the totems enumerated by Dr. Müller are the eel, the dolphin, and the mouse (p. 218). According to him the taboo on eating the totemic animal or plant appears to be no longer generally observed.

these savages attribute to dreams is shown by the circumstance that in Yap there are magicians (*tamerong*) whose business it is by spells and incantations to avert the misfortunes threatened in dreams.[1] According to another account of Yap psychology, it is not the spirit (*an'i*) of a man but his thinking part (*tafenai*) which escapes from the body of the dreamer and wanders about playing all manner of queer pranks; in the morning, when he awakes, he is roused by the thinking part (*tafenai*) creeping back into his body through his nostrils.[2] In delirium also the soul, or at all events the thinking part (*tafenai*), leaves a man's body, and it may or may not be enticed to return. Similarly, one cause of sickness is an attempt made by the soul or the thinking part to escape from its fleshly tabernacle, and all the charms recited over the sick are exhortations addressed to the soul to remain in the body of the sufferer.[3] Epileptic fits are explained by the hypothesis that the soul or thinking part of the patient hovers about outside of him on the wind, and that from time to time it hits him and knocks him down.[4]

Explanation of delirium, sickness, and epilepsy.

§ 5. *The Fate of the Soul after Death*

At death the soul (*ya'al*), the invisible likeness of the man, departs from the body. As to the changes which take place in it, through its forcible separation from the body, opinions are not agreed. Some hold that the soul thereby loses its capacity for clear thought and becomes like an idiot or a lunatic. Others believe that after death the spirit (*an'i*) awakes to new life. The general view is that the spirit (*an'i*) gains nothing in respect of its faculties after its departure from the body. According to this opinion, the intellectual faculties of a soul after death correspond exactly to those which it possessed in life. Hence the undeveloped intellect of the child remains undeveloped after death.[5]

State of the soul after death.

[1] S. Walleser, in *Anthropos*, viii. (1913) p. 611. As to the Yap conception of the human soul, see also W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 317 *sqq.*

[2] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 149.
[3] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 148.
[4] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 148 *sq.*
[5] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 612.

After lingering for a time near the body the soul ascends to heaven.

Be that as it may, when the soul has once quitted the body for good and all, it lingers for a time in the neighbourhood; not until the body has decayed is the soul light enough to fly up to heaven. That is why for a considerable time after a death the people round about are afraid to leave their houses at dark. "He might come and kill me," they say. Of a judgment after death, and of a subterranean river like the Styx into which the souls of the wicked fall, the natives of Yap, at least in the western part of the island, know nothing. Without distinction of good or bad, the souls of the dead are believed to ascend to heaven[1] and take up their abode in a large house called Falraman. Over it presides Yalafath, the creator of the world. He is a kind but rather unsympathetic god; nevertheless, if persons in distress pray to him, he intervenes and overrules the horde of evil demons. The house in which the spirits live is just like any big house in Yap, and the souls of men and women who go there assume or retain the same bodily shape which they had in this life; but according to some people it is only the thinking part (*tafenai*) of the soul which goes to heaven. The souls or the thinking parts of children go there too, but whether or not they grow up and grow old is more than anybody knows. However, the souls of stillborn children never get to heaven. All that they know is how to cry; therefore they stay in the ground where they were buried and cry incessantly for their mothers.[2] Even the souls of grown-up people who did not have their ears and noses pierced in their lifetime on earth are not admitted straightway to the heavenly mansion; they must stop outside under the eaves for a time, some people say for nine days; after that they may sneak into the house, but must stow themselves away in some hole or corner of the edifice. However, it would seem that the big house in heaven is not so much the permanent abode of departed souls as a gigantic hospice in which they take up their quarters from time to time, to rest themselves when they are tired of roaming about the world.[3]

Yalafath, the Creator.

The big house of spirits in heaven.

[1] S. Walleser, *l.c.*

[2] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 147. As to the fate of the soul after death, see also W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 317 *sqq.* According to him, the name of the celestial mansion is Folroman (pp. 318, 319).

[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 613.

The return of the ghost.

For when a soul has been long enough in Falraman to allow its mortal heaviness and earthly odour to wear off, it returns to its former abode in Yap, where it is now known as an *athegith*, which we may perhaps translate by ghost, though in point of fact Yap ghosts differ from European ghosts in being invisible to mortal eyes. If on revisiting his old home the ghost finds that his people had not honoured his remains sufficiently at burial, he punishes them by bringing sickness on the household, and he persists in so doing until his corpse has been interred with due lamentations and dirges, and the magician has pronounced a spell exhorting him to desist from his pranks.[1]

Ascent of living people to heaven.

But in order to go to heaven it is not absolutely necessary to be dead; indeed, if we may trust the people of Yap, it is comparatively easy for living people to ascend to the celestial mansions. In former times, they say, men knew the secret of going to heaven, and many of them actually arrived there, some on a cloud, and others on the wings of a huge fabulous bird, and they afterwards returned to earth with rich presents which they had received in the upper regions. But nowadays the secret of ascending to heaven is lost, and no living wight can effect an entrance into the abode of departed spirits.[2]

Heaven conceived of as an island just like Yap.

However, in the opinion of the people of Yap, heaven is not reserved exclusively for the souls of the human dead, nor is the whole extent of it occupied by the big house Falraman, where the spirits of the departed lodge. They think of heaven as resembling exactly their own beloved island of Yap, for to imagine anything better exceeds the mental capacity of the islanders. According to them, therefore, heaven is an island surrounded by a sea, on which the inhabitants sail in canoes and catch plenty of fish. The island is also well stocked with trees and shrubs, including the fruit-trees which grow in Yap; and there are also great beds of taro. Indeed, most of the fruits with which we are familiar here below grew originally in heaven and were afterwards transplanted to earth. As for the inhabitants of heaven, they consist of numerous spirits (*kau*), male and female, married and unmarried. In the tales and legends

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 147 *sq.*

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 613.

these celestial beings are represented as leading the same sort of life and endowed with the same capacities and qualities as the people of Yap, not one whit better. The only advantages which they enjoy over mortals are that their bodies are invisible, and that their magical powers are more extensive. They reside in their private houses all over the island; but there are also large common houses or hospices, both on the coast and inland, in which a spirit can always find comfortable accommodation by day or night. All these houses, in their plan and furniture, resemble exactly the houses in Yap. Even the large stone platforms, on which councils are held, exist in heaven beside the big common houses just as on earth.[1]

The supreme god Yalafath, his domestic worries.

The supreme god himself, whose name is Yalafath, is just like an ordinary chief, with all the cares and worries which family life and official duties entail on common mortals. For example, they say that the god's son once fell out with his father-in-law, Lug-e-len, about a charm. So his father-in-law, in high dudgeon, ordered his daughter to quit her husband, which she did. But Yalafath said to his son, "Go and call your wife back." His son went to call her, but his father-in-law said to him, "She cannot go with you." The divine son returned and reported the reply to his divine father, and after waiting a while he went back again to the house of his father-in-law. Meantime his father-in-law had carved a life-like portrait of his daughter in wood and laid it in the house; and when his son-in-law came to fetch his wife home, the cunning old man said to him, "Your wife is in the house there. She is sick." His son-in-law went into the house and found there only the image, for his wife had hidden herself. He took the image by the arm and shook her, but naturally she did not waken. Then he perceived that it was only an image which his father-in-law would palm off on him instead of his wife. He returned again to his father and reported the trick that had been played on him. His father said, "I will give you a charm. Go and apply it to the image, and the image will turn into a human being. Take her and marry her." His son went and applied the charm, and the image came to life and went with him.

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 612 *sq.*

But his wife followed them both and remained with her husband. The woman who had been at first a lifeless image received the name of Togeru, which is the name that all secondary or subordinate wives still bear in Yap.[1]

Souls of the dead pass into lizards.

According to one account, the souls of the dead pass into the bodies of great lizards and freshwater eels, and for that reason these creatures are taboo or sacred. The lizards are carefully tended and fed in a holy grove by keepers appointed for the purpose. From all parts of the island people send coco-nuts and choice fruits to these keepers, because, through their constant association with the sacred animals, they have acquired miraculous powers over lightning and earthquake, and it rests with them to send rain or to cause drought.[2]

Lug, the Spirit of Death, and his net.

Again, some people say that Lug, the Spirit of Death, passes through the world every month at the time of the full moon to catch the souls of the dead in his net. Those whom he catches he gives to another spirit called Nomou, who swallows them. But whether the souls can do anything to evade Lug's net, whether it is only the souls of the wicked who are caught, or whether the souls of the good are also entrapped, on these points the natives apparently give no information, and as little do we know what becomes of the souls which Nomou has swallowed.[3]

§ 6. *The Worship of the Dead*

The religion of Yap is the worship of ancestors.

The national religion of the natives of Yap, according to Father Sixtus Walleser, is fundamentally nothing but the worship of ancestors; but among the vast multitude of ancestral spirits, the only ones which every man really respects and fears are the spirits of his dead parents, to which may be added the spirits of his dead brothers and sisters, and also the spirits of such of his children as had attained to manhood or womanhood at the time of their death. About all the others he does not trouble himself. The souls of children also who departed this life very

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 613 *sq.*

[2] F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, pp. 22 *sq.*

[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 612. As to Lug, the God of Death, and the net in which he catches human souls, compare W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 317.

young are not worshipped, because they never arrived at years of discretion. Thus for every man the worshipful spirits of the dead are reduced to the spirits of his own nearest relations of adult age who died lately. For such spirits there is a special name, *athegith* or *thagith*.[1]

General distrust of the souls of the dead.

In harmony with his idea of the human soul the native of Yap conceives these worshipful spirits as endowed with an invisible body, which in form and appearance answers to the one which the men and women had in their lifetime. In general he looks on his dead ancestors with a certain mistrust or misgiving. Some of them are regarded as helpful, others as harmful, and others as harmless, not to say indifferent to everything. It may happen, they say, that an evil spirit gains control over the souls of the dead; in that case they are obliged to obey him and become, like him, dangerous to mankind. On the other hand, it may also occur that a good spirit gets the souls of the dead in his power; in that case they follow him to heaven, and concern themselves no more about their living kinsfolk on earth. But other souls are never mastered by any spirit, good, bad, or indifferent; accordingly, being free to follow their own inclination, they sometimes reside in heaven and sometimes descend to earth. In their behaviour to man they are very capricious; they can help him, but also injure him. How a spirit contrives to get the soul of a dead man into its power is not clear. When the question is put to a native, he answers it by saying, "He does so by killing the man." As the people of Yap generally ascribe natural death to the influence or interference of a spirit, they apparently assume that the spirit which has killed a man will henceforth have the man's soul in its power. Practically these distinctions between the friendly and the hostile souls of the dead have no other result than that of inspiring a general distrust of them all, and consequently of inducing people to propitiate

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 1055 *sq.*, who represents the name of these spirits as *ẓagiẓ*. But by *ẓ* he represents the sound of the English *th*, which has no representative in the German alphabet. For I take it that *ẓagiẓ* is the same with *athegith* (W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 148), and that *Yelafaẓ*, which Father Walleser gives as the name of the supreme god, is identical with the Yalafath of W. H. Furness (*op. cit.* p. 147) and of F. W. Christian (*The Caroline Islands*, p. 384). As to Father Walleser's transliteration of native words, see his note, *Anthropos* viii. (1913) p. 607.

them indiscriminately; for, not knowing the precise disposition of any particular spirit towards himself, a man naturally deems it the safest course to keep on the best possible terms with them all.[1]

Souls of the dead worshipped in the house.

The principal place where the souls of the recent dead are worshipped by their relations is the house which they inhabited in life, for they are believed to return to it from time to time. In some districts the basket of the deceased is kept in the house and regarded as the seat of the souls of the departed. Prayers are put up to the souls on various occasions in order to secure their favour, and offerings are made to them at the beginning of meals by throwing away a portion of the food. This latter custom was formerly universal, but nowadays it is not observed by everybody. In passing a place where his parents are buried, a man will always propitiate their souls by throwing them some betel nuts.[2]

Souls of the dead in cockchafers.

The souls of the recent dead are supposed to show themselves often in the shape of small shining cockchafers, which are not uncommon in Yap. So when such an insect alights upon any one or flies into a house, the person to whom this dubious piece of luck happens never forgets to exclaim, "Have pity on us!" or "Avert all ill from me!"[3]

Necromancy.

An important part is played by the necromancers who are supposed to be endowed with the power of summoning the spirits of the dead and questioning them. When these persons are engaged in the discharge of their office, they fall into a somnolent state, yawning and behaving like people half asleep; and they speak in unfamiliar tones like a child. The voice is thought to be that of the spirit whom the medium has invoked. This invocation of the dead is practised by women as well as by men. The great majority of the natives repose implicit faith in these pretenders; only a few of the shrewder minds suspect the imposture.[4]

§ 7. *The Disposal of the Dead, and Mourning Rites*

Disposal of the dead.

The manner in which a people dispose of their dead, and the rites which they observe on the occasion, commonly

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1056.
[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 1056 *sq.*
[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1057.
[4] S. Walleser, *l.c.*

shed a good deal of light on the conception which they entertain of the human soul and of its destiny after death. So it is in Yap. In that island the bodies of the dead are interred in burial grounds, which are usually situated in some secluded part of the wilderness, near a village of the Pimlingai or slave class.[1] The longer the burial is deferred, the greater is the honour shown to the departed; haste in burial is thought to incur the risk of a visit from the ghost, who is apt to bring sickness and misfortune in his train. However, the time during which a corpse is kept in the house appears not to exceed a few days.[2] If the nostrils of the deceased were not pierced in his lifetime, they are always pierced after his death; otherwise his soul would be refused admittance to the heavenly mansion.[3]

Burial.

Appeal to Yalafath on behalf of the sick.

While there is still hope that a sick man may recover, the services of priests or magicians are employed to dispel the demons of disease and to enlist the sympathy and protection of the supreme god Yalafath in behalf of the sufferer.[4] But when all is over, and the body is lying in state, the house and the ground about it, enclosed by a fence of light bamboo, are occupied exclusively by women; no men, except members of the Pimlingai or slave class, may penetrate within the enclosure. Friends show their respect for the departed by bringing strings of pearl-shell money as gifts for the corpse; and if they are wealthy and liberal, they will even offer pieces of the much more valuable stone money, which may require the strength of several men to carry. These presents are deposited by the donors, with a good deal of display, at one end of the yard in front of the house. However, the liberality of friends on these occasions is more apparent than real, for most of the presents are returned to the donors after the burial. A corpse is never carried out of the house by the doorway; to carry it out thus would bring ill luck on the inmates, probably by facilitating the return of the ghost. Hence a special opening is made in the wall of the house to allow the deceased to pass out of it on his last journey. As the walls of the houses consist of reeds and matting, there is no difficulty

Presents brought to the dead.

Corpse carried out of house by a special opening.

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 177.
[2] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 164.
[3] W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 268.
[4] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* p. 163.

about making a hole in them to permit the passage of the corpse, and none in stopping it up afterwards to prevent the return of the ghost to his old home.[1] Wrapped up in mats, the body is carried by members of the slave class to the place of burial, followed by the mourners wailing in relays. The corpse of a poor man is hurried to the grave as quickly as possible, but the body of a wealthy man is carried by a circuitous route past as many houses as possible, in order that the grief of his relatives may be seen and heard far and wide.[2]

Burial: position of the body in the grave.

A shallow grave is dug by the slaves and lined with stones and flat pieces of coral. The position in which the body is placed in the grave depends on the manner of death. If a man dies of an ordinary disease or of old age, he is buried with his head to the west and his knees drawn up; if he dies in battle, he is buried with his head to the north, and his legs and body are laid quite straight; if he dies of a cough, he is buried with his knees drawn close to his breast, and his face looking downward. A few pearl shells are interred with the corpse, for the dead man must not arrive empty-handed in Falraman, the abode of departed spirits in the sky. And lest he should suffer hunger and stumble in the dark on the long road, a sprouting coco-nut is planted at the head of the grave and banked round with earth, to provide him with food on the journey and with oil to light him on the darkling way. Slabs of stone or coral are then piled up round about the grave, and earth is tightly packed in the crevices to prevent the big lizards from disturbing the repose of the dead.[3]

Funeral of a chief.

Such would seem to be the ceremonies commonly observed at the funerals of ordinary people. But when the deceased was a chief, the rites are more elaborate. The corpse is carefully oiled, tricked out in all its finery, and tied

[1] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 164 *sqq.*, 168. The desire to bar the return of the ghost is not assigned by Mr. Furness as the motive for carrying the corpse out of the house by a special opening; but a comparison of world-wide usages makes this practically certain. See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, i. 452 *sqq.* Compare W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 270, who heard nothing in Yap of a custom of carrying out the dead by a special opening in the wall.

[2] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 169 *sqq.*, 176.

[3] W. H. Furness, *op. cit.* pp. 172-177.

in a sitting posture to a scaffold. The son places the spear in the hand of his dead father, hangs the axe over his left shoulder, and sits down opposite him. The friendly chiefs cower silently in a circle, with the most eminent of their subjects. In a whining tone the son praises the good qualities of the departed, and every sentence of his funeral oration or lament is greeted with the assent of his hearers. Now and then one of the oldest men present takes up his parable and recites some famous episode in the life of his deceased friend, as, for example, how he smote the foe in battle, or how, on the last stormy voyage, the fleet but for him would never have come home; and again at the close of the narrative the audience chimes in with the words, "Thou hast spoken the truth." Next a band of women, with dishevelled hair, steps forward and dances round the corpse with ear-piercing cries of woe. The son silently distributes beads, walrus teeth, and other presents among the mourners, who now retire and make room for others; and so it goes on day and night, until the corpse is quite decomposed. During the whole ceremonial, which usually lasts three or four days, the son of the deceased fasts and very rarely quits his place for a few minutes. The remains of the body are then wrapped up in fine mats and conveyed to the hills, where they are buried. A small pyramid of stones is erected over the grave, and close at hand the son builds a hut of leaves, where he remains in complete solitude for a hundred days. The estate of the dead chief, and especially his coco-nut palms, are subjected to a taboo for a long time after his decease; no one may eat or sell the fruit of the trees under pain of death until the taboo has been removed.[1]

Pyramid on grave.

Taboo on coco-nut palms.

A graveyard in Yap.

One of the graveyards towards the northern end of Yap was visited by Mr. Christian. He had some difficulty in finding the place, but after wandering up hill and down dale, through copses and over land tufted with clumps of coarse grass, wild sorrel, and arrowroot, he came suddenly upon a gentle slope covered with little flat platforms built of small blocks of basalt, many of them thickly overgrown with a dense tangle of climbing fern. These monuments, some six

[1] F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, pp. 21 *sq.*

feet long by four feet wide, and two or three feet high, marked graves of the common folk. The graves of chiefs and wealthy men are much higher, and are faced with upright slabs of stone. One chief's monument seen by Mr. Christian consisted of three tiers of stone built on a low platform of earth measuring twenty-five feet long by twenty-two feet wide, and one foot high; the topmost tier was paved with flattish blocks of stone. On these graves it is customary to throw quantities of the chewed fruit of the pandanus, apparently as a propitiatory offering to the spirits of the dead.[1]

Seclusion of near relations after a death.

After a death the nearest relations of the deceased are obliged to retire for thrice nine days to a solitary place, where the slaves (*Pimlingai*) erect a temporary hut for their accommodation. The reason which seems to be alleged for this compulsory retirement is that their persons are infected with the smell of death; people feel a disgust at such persons and fight shy of them. We may suspect, however, that the true motive is, or was originally, the fear of the ghost, who might be thought to cling to his kinsfolk for a while after his death. The time of their seclusion is devoted by the relatives to mourning day and night for the deceased. After their return they must still spend thrice nine days together in complete idleness, and must observe certain taboos; for example, they may not eat some kinds of food, especially certain sorts of fish. On the ninth day a magician comes and pronounces an incantation. After that, the relatives are free to walk on certain paths, which are prescribed exactly for them by the magician. When another nine days have elapsed, their liberty to walk about is further enlarged, and so on. Many of them, however, especially the more distant relations, take their departure after the ninth day. But much depends on the totem (*genong*) of the individual. In many totemic clans the period of mourning is shortened to ten days.[2]

Fields and fruit-trees of the deceased tabooed for a time.

When at last the relatives are supposed to be rid of the smell of death, they appoint certain fields or certain fruit-trees, the property of the deceased, to which the smell in

[1] F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 294-296.
[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1052.

question is conceived still to adhere. The fruits grown in these fields or on these trees may not be eaten so long as this malodorous condition (*liu*) is thought to last. On certain days the coco-nuts are brought down and piled up at the foot of the palms. No work may be done on these days. There are great variations both as to the extent of ground covered by the taboo and as to the length of its duration. In many districts the taboo is only observed after the death of a chief. At its conclusion a feast is held, at which the fruits that have accumulated in the interval are distributed and eaten.[1]

§ 8. *The Gods or Spirits*

All nature tenanted by spirits.

But the souls of the dead are by no means the only spirits which the fancy of the islander conjures up and by which he believes himself to be surrounded. To his thinking, the earth, the air, and the sea are peopled by a host of spirits (*kan*); there is no extraordinary natural phenomenon, no sickness, no misfortune which he does not ascribe to the influence of one of these mighty beings. No wonder that at every step he imagines himself to be threatened by their malignant machinations, and that he seeks to guard himself against them. Some of these spirits dwell in the depth of the ocean, others in trees and bushes, others haunt the wilderness, and yet others play their pranks in the villages. There are special spirits for war, for the dance, and for the other departments of human life. There is no end to the names of the spirits that are mentioned in the tales and legends of the people.[2]

Native conception of spirits.

The general conception which the native forms to himself of these spirits (*kan*) is that of beings endowed with uncanny powers and usually invisible; when they do present themselves to sight, their shape is that either of a man or of some horrible monster. Hence it comes about that all animals of unusually large size and peculiar aspect are supposed to

Spirits in lizards.

lodge some spirit or other. Such creatures, for example, are certain eels and two species of lizards, the great lizard

[1] S. Walleser, *l.c.* [2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 1057 *sq.*, 1067.

and the monitor lizard. If anybody kills one of these animals, he kills at the same time the spirit which inhabited it, but he does not escape with impunity; sickness or some evil, perhaps even death, will surely overtake the transgressor. Yet many a native does not scruple to kill the great lizards, except during a festal month, which is a close time for these reptiles; and he will also destroy other creatures which he believes to be tenanted by spirits, for he thinks that in magic he possesses the means of averting or neutralizing the threatened evil. As for spirits that are purely beneficent to man, the native of Yap knows none such: not one of the spirits is to be trusted: even the best are excessively exacting: one and all of them deem it more blessed to receive than to give.[1]

Spirits of clans worshipped in sacred groves.

Amongst the most important of the spirits are those which preside over the clans and are worshipped in sacred groves.[2] The name of these sacred groves is *taliu*, and the same word is applied to a burial-ground. Such groves, where the trees are allowed to run wild, are situated apart from the villages, sometimes in waste land or in a little ravine. No wood may be cut in them under pain of heavy punishment to be inflicted by the offended spirit whose sanctuary is thus profaned. For example, there is one particular grove of which it is believed, that were sacrilegious hands to cut it down, the whole of Yap would be destroyed by a typhoon. Common mortals are forbidden even to set foot within the holy ground. He who should dare to transgress the rule would, it is believed, be killed by the spirit. A pious man, versed in the lore of the spirits, would not so much as slake his thirst at a brook which, in the rainy season, flows down a hill-side where one of these groves is situated; still less would he wash in its water, for he would fear the vengeance of the invisible master of the grove. In the grove is a stone which is the seat or representative of the spirit. Over it a small hut is erected, which is renewed from time to time. The new hut is constructed outside the grove by certain appointed persons, and it is placed in position over the holy stone by the priest or magician (*tamerong*). Near the grove is a large house for

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 615.

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 616 *sqq.*

the priest or magician and for the people who have business there. Apart from it is the private dwelling of the High Priest or Arch-magician (*tamerong ni p'etiliu*). Of all the sacred groves the most important is that of Tomil, situated at the harbour of that name on the eastern side of the island.[1]

Power of spirits of the groves.

Great power is ascribed to the local spirits of the groves. It is they who bestow on men the boon of the fruit-trees and multiply the fish in the sea; but it is they also who send storms, and rain, and drought, and all the diseases that afflict mankind and animals and plants.[2]

Stone identified with one of the Pleiades in a sacred grove.

In the sacred grove at Maki there is, besides the usual stone which serves as the seat of the spirit, another stone of a very remarkable character. It is said to have fallen from heaven, and to be neither more nor less than one of the Pleiades (*Magirgir*), the true number of which, contrary to the vulgar opinion, is one hundred, though at present there are only ninety-nine of them in the sky, the hundredth being now in the sacred grove at Maki. While the constellation is visible in the nightly sky, the magician of Maki covers up the cisterns from which he draws his water supply, and he drinks no rain water which falls during the same period. It is said that he prays to the constellation.[3]

Stone identified with the sun in a sacred grove.

In the sacred grove at Olog there is another stone which is called a sun (*yal*), though how precisely it is related to the orb of day does not appear. Be that as it may, the stone is worshipped by the local magician. The other stone, or rather the fallen star, at Maki was also formerly at Olog. The way in which it was transferred to Maki is said to have

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 625 *sq.* As to the sacred stone with the hut over it, compare *id.* p. 623.

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 622. According to W. Müller, who has investigated the subject very fully, the local spirits of the sacred groves (*taliu*) are essentially gods or demons of vegetation (*Vegetationsgötter*, *Vegetationsdämon*); there are seven or eight of them, each worshipped in a district of his own, and their worship is exactly regulated according to the calendar. See W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 306, 320 *sqq.* The calendar of Yap is said to differ entirely from that of all the other Caroline Islands. The number of days in the month is either thirty or twenty-nine, and the number of the months in alternate years is twelve and thirteen. Each district reckons its months independently, and it may be that the thirteenth (intercalary) month does not fall in the same year in all the districts. See W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 280-286.

[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1054.

been this. The magician of the sacred grove at Olog, whose name was Kokou, had two sons; the elder was called Thuth, and the younger Melap. Kokou worshipped two stones, whereof one was a sun, and the other was a star of the constellation of the Pleiades. One day Thuth went on a journey, whereupon his younger brother Melap took the stone that was a star, and went with it to Maki. When Thuth returned, his parents told him that Melap had carried away the star to Maki. Then said Thuth, "Nevermore may Melap come hither, or I'll have his life; and I may never more meet him, or I would kill him." So the star remained in Maki, and the sun abode in Olog. From that time the magicians of Olog and Maki have never been allowed to meet, for if they were to encounter each other, one of them would be sure to die. Hence the two wizards always shun each other. Not very many years ago the pair happened to meet by accident, and, strange to say, neither of them dropped dead on the spot. But not long afterwards both of them departed this vale of tears, which practically demonstrated the truth of the tradition and the wisdom of the custom based on it.[1]

The High Priest, or rather perhaps Arch-magician, is a personage who enjoys great consideration, not because the people love him, but because they fear him. He appears to them as a sort of walking bogey, the representative of the dreaded spirit of the grove; and, more than that, he passes for a man endowed with mysterious and uncanny magical powers. Any one who should dare to touch a hair of his sacred head would call down on himself the wrath of the spirits.[2]

The High Priest, or Arch-magician.

As illustrative of the magical powers supposed to be wielded by the priests or magicians of these sacred groves, we may take the case of the sacred grove at Pemogoi. In it there is preserved the spine of a sting-ray, about which wonderful things are told and believed. When the chiefs wish the sun to fall from the sky, all that they have to do is to communicate their wish to the magician of the sacred grove at Pemogoi. On receiving the mandate, the wizard takes the spine of the sting-ray and carries it to the

Magical powers ascribed to the priests or magicians of the sacred groves.

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1054.

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 627.

sacred stone which represents the spirit; then he utters his incantation over it and strikes the stone with the spine of the fish, whereupon the sun falls plump down on the earth. Or if the chiefs desire that the sun, without crashing down on the earth, should merely alter his course in the sky, the magician takes up the said spine, and after uttering his incantation points the bone at the sun. According as he directs the point of the spine to the north or the south, to the east or the west, the sun is obliged to follow it in the sky. Further, if the chiefs desire a wasting pestilence to break out, they have again only to intimate their wish to the magician of Pemogoi. That wizard thereupon catches a small specimen of the great lizard, wraps it in bark of the areca palm, and deposits it in the little house which covers the holy stone in the sacred grove. When the dead lizard begins to stink, a great pestilence begins to rage in Yap. If the body of the lizard were not removed before seven days were up, every soul in Yap would die. Once more, if the chiefs wish to swamp the whole island under a great wave of the sea, it is again the business of the magician at Pemogoi to give effect to the wish. So he takes a wooden spade, goes into the sacred grove, digs a hole in a certain place, and pours sea-water into it. No sooner is that done than the sea floods the island, and all the people perish to a man.[1] Can we wonder that personages endowed with powers so tremendous are objects of terror to their fellow men?

The office of High Priest or Arch-magician hereditary.

The High Priest or Arch-magician is little more than the creature of the head chiefs; he is not so much the priest of the common people as the intermediary between the high chiefs and the spirit of the grove. Anybody else who would exercise in private the magical functions which of right belong to the Arch-magician must pay that functionary heavily for the privilege. The dignity of Arch-magician is hereditary. It passes from the father to his eldest son, or, if there are no sons, to his younger brother or his eldest son, or to the eldest son of the Arch-magician's daughter or sister. As a preparation for his office, the Arch-magician must learn from his predecessor the various incantations

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1053.

or spells. It is said that many of these spells have been lost, because the master magician died before he could impart the priceless lore to his apprentice. For a European to ascertain the words of the spells is not easy, since they are kept an official secret, and a foreigner is the last person to whom they are likely to be betrayed.[1]

Duties of the priest or magician of the sacred grove.

As warden of the sacred grove, the magician is charged with the duty of renewing the spirit-house which stands over the holy stone within the hallowed precinct. In his capacity of priest he receives the offerings from the worshippers and presents them to the spirit at definite times and on definite occasions. He also pronounces the incantations (*pig*) over the people and over the members of the higher ranks of the Secret Society (*douad*). Before officiating he is bound to observe certain taboos (*fal*). According to the importance of the incantation (*pig*) he must abstain from eating fish for three, five, or nine days. Sometimes he is forbidden to be with his wife. Twice a year, in two prescribed months, he makes an official circuit of the villages in his district in order to pronounce his incantation over the members of the higher ranks of the Secret Society (*douad*), and over the food which they are met on these occasions to consume at a banquet. In general, the magician must observe the rules laid down for the conduct of members of the Secret Society. He may not partake of cooked food which has been touched by a woman or a child. A special cook dresses his victuals for him. But an old woman, past the age of child-bearing, is free to cultivate his taro-patch and to fetch home the fruits of the earth for him.[2]

Burial of the High Priest or Arch-magician.

In contrast to common mortals, whose corpses are sometimes kept above ground for three or four weeks after their death, the High Priest or Arch-magician must be buried on the day after he departed this life. Special burial-grounds are provided in waste land for the priests or magicians of the sacred groves. The mode of burial of the High Priest or Arch-magician is peculiar. Whereas the dead are usually buried in a lying posture, this high dignitary is lowered into the grave in a sitting posture, and his body is covered with earth only up to the eyes. The upper part of his head

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 626 *sq.*

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 627.

ornamented with a large comb, protrudes above the surface of the ground.[1]

Fish offered to the sacred grove.

Among the offerings brought to the sacred groves are fish, which every head chief is bound to send on certain days to the holy place. For this purpose the chief orders a man to go a-fishing, and his catch is destined for the use of the spirit of the grove. Should the fisherman come back empty-handed, the spirit, or the magician, must put up with a paltry compensation in shell-money. For however trumpery it may be, an offering is still an offering, and the spirit must take it and be thankful.[2]

Sacred month.

A month, which we may perhaps describe as sabbatical, is set apart for the special worship of the local spirit of the grove. In that month the inhabitants of the villages round about may not work nor give anything away to people of another village. If anybody were to break this rule by giving away something to somebody of another village, a misfortune would befall him in the following year. On an appointed day of the sacred month a man is sent to catch fish for the spirit (*kan*) of the grove. When he comes back, no one may meet him, because he is carrying fish which are to serve as food for the spirit. So everybody goes out of the way of the fisherman. The fish which he has caught he hands over to the High Priest or Arch-magician, and that dignitary offers one of the fish to the great lizard in the grove, praying to the creature at the same time, because the lizard is believed to represent the spirit of the grove. One or more of these lizards are commonly to be seen in a sacred grove, because they often find there the food that suits them. Sometimes the lizard leaves the grove and visits the villages. During the month which is sacred to the spirit of the grove, it is unlawful to kill one of these great lizards, because the animal may have partaken of the offering, which would, in the eyes of the natives, be proof that it is a spirit. Further, it is unlawful during the month to eat certain fish and fruits, because these are reserved for the consumption of the spirit and his priest or magician. Hence anybody who catches fish of the forbidden sort in the course of the month must bring them to the priest

Sacred lizards of the grove.

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 627 *sq.*

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 628.

of the grove. When the priest has offered a single fish to the great lizard in the grove, he is free to consume all the rest of the catch.[1]

Offerings at the grove in the sacred month.

At the beginning of the sacred month the people assemble with their offerings and carry them in company to the priest of the grove, and the same ceremony takes place at the end of the festal season. The priest or magician then utters his incantation (*pig*) over the people, that no evil may befall them. On this occasion one of the worshippers, in presenting the offerings, speaks as follows: "Here is the offering for the spirit of this grove. If any one has sinned against the prohibition to give anything to anybody, or has worked, or has hidden any of the food that belongs to the spirit, then may the spirit send him a great piece of bad luck before this month comes round next year."[2]

The offerings expiatory.

In accordance with the character which the people attribute to the spirits, their offerings partake rather of the nature of atonement or expiation than of thank-offerings or simple adoration, for thank-offerings and adoration play very little part in the popular religion. The spirits are thought of as naturally unkind, and the aim of the worshipper is to soften their hard hearts and so to worm himself into their favour. When a man knows that he has broken the commands of the spirit, he applies to a petty magician, who, in consideration of a small sum of native money, mumbles his spell and thus constrains the spirit to hold his hand and spare the offender.[3]

The priest of the grove prays to his predecessors.

In presenting the offering in the sacred grove, the priest or magician does not address his prayers directly to the spirit (*kan*). He applies in the first instance to his deceased predecessor and begs him to intercede with his deceased predecessor in turn, and so on, naming all the dead priests or magicians who held office before him, and whose names he remembers. When he has exhausted the list, he prays to the other priests or magicians, his predecessors, whose names are forgotten, begging them to intercede with the spirit of the grove, in order that he may transmit the prayer to his (the spirit's) mother Margigi, and she to the

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 623 *sq.* [2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 624.
[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 628.

inhabitants of Sipin, her home, and they to the supreme god Yalafath.[1]

Worship of the grove a worship of ancestral spirits.

From this prayer Father Walleser, our best authority on the religion of Yap, infers that the worship of the spirits of the sacred groves is really a worship of ancestral spirits; since the priest, in order to gain the ear of the spirit of the grove, is obliged to approach him through the whole line of his dead predecessors in office. In confirmation of this view Father Walleser points out that the name for a sacred grove (*taliu*) is also the name for a burial-ground. As for the supreme god Yalafath, though he is invoked in the prayer, it is only as the god of Margigi, the mother of the spirit of the grove. Thus Yalafath receives a certain degree of consideration and respect from the worshippers. Yet it would be a mistake, Father Walleser tells us, to suppose that Yalafath stands in close relations with the people and is actually worshipped by them as the supreme god. For all the practical purposes of life Yalafath is as unreal as the inhabitants of Sipin, a mysterious island somewhere away to the north, where Margigi, the mother of the spirit of the grove, is believed to dwell. The native of Yap, says Father Walleser, knows and fears only the spirit of the sacred grove; Yalafath is for him a god with whom he has nothing to do.[2] To sum up, in the last analysis the religion of Yap appears to resolve itself into the worship of the dead.

§ 9. *Magic*

Magic the universal remedy for all ills.

But there is still a department of the spiritual life of the natives on which as yet we have only touched, and which deserves a fuller notice, I mean the department of magic. The native, as we have seen, imagines himself to be encompassed by a host of dangerous spirits, to whose agency he attributes all the ills that befall him. Hence, whenever misfortune of any kind overtakes him, he sees in it the hand of one of these uncanny beings and takes his measures accordingly. To his thinking, the universal remedy in his struggle with the powers of evil, the panacea for all his

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 628 *sq.*, compare *id.* p. 1061.
[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 629.

woes, is magic in its twofold form of spell and ritual.[1] Thus, far from being that black and purely malignant art, which many European writers, influenced by Christian prejudice, take it to be, magic presents itself to the mind of the native of Yap as a beneficent power, which offers him the one hope of salvation in the troubled and stormy sea of human life. Unless we can picture to ourselves this aspect of magic as an instrument which is believed to work untold good for mankind, not only negatively, by restraining the powers of evil, but positively by furthering all forms of human activity, we shall most seriously misunderstand the life and thought of the savage.

The priests or magicians of the sacred groves supposed to fertilize certain fruits of the earth.

To illustrate this supposed beneficent aspect of magic we may note that in Yap the priests or magicians of the sacred groves are usually supposed to possess a magical power of fertilizing certain fruits of the earth, and so of contributing directly to the sustenance of the people. Thus, for instance, the High Priest or Arch-magician of Tomil is believed to be able to quicken the taro fields and bread-fruit plantations of the whole of Yap. The priest or magician of Olog and Pemogoi understands the magic of sweet potatoes; and the priest or magician of Maki is an expert in the magic of coco-nuts and areca palms. So when people contemplate planting any of these trees or roots on a large scale, they call in the help of the magician who is conversant with the appropriate magic; he pronounces the proper spell over the new plantation, and receives a large fee in Yap money. The better to promote the growth of the trees or plants, the magician commonly recommends his clients to observe certain taboos, which generally have reference to food. Some of the taboos inculcated for this purpose have grown so familiar to the people that they instinctively comply with them, even when they do not summon the magician to their help. For example, on the days when a woman is at work in the taro fields, she will not partake of food until she returns home, which may not be till evening.[2]

The reason why the magician of a single sacred grove

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1058. As to magic in Yap, see W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 363 *sqq.*

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1055.

may thus be held responsible for a certain sort of fruit all over the island is, according to many natives, that formerly these fruits were dedicated exclusively to the spirit of that particular grove.[1]

Magical rites for everything.

The native of Yap imagines the spiritual world (*makan*) to be one in which might is right and differences are settled by the ordeal of battle. In fact, the spirits wage a perpetual war with each other, and their weapons are magical formulas and magical rites. A spirit who owns a specially powerful charm can overcome all the other spirits. But man, so thinks the native of Yap, can wield the same weapons, and thus prove himself a match for the spirits, whether good or bad. There are magic rites which can produce the great phenomena of nature, call down misfortune on any one, avert every form of evil, and win the favour of fortune. In short, there is nothing in the world for which a magical formula and a magical rite cannot be found efficacious to bring about the desired result. It is alleged that these formulas and rites have been imparted to men by the spirits. Hence every magician worships a particular spirit, from whom he pretends to have derived his power. Of the charms thus revealed some suffice of themselves to effect their purpose, others employ the agency of the spirits, which are thus rendered, in a sense, the servants or familiars of the magician, and do his bidding.[2]

Charms revealed by spirits.

Every man has his own charms.

Every man in Yap possesses, so to say, a whole arsenal of these magical weapons, with which he can set evil spirits at defiance and accomplish the dearest wishes of his heart. For example, when a man is returning from the wilderness, just before he reaches the village he will break a few twigs from a particular bush and, after murmuring certain magical words over them, will lay them with great ceremony on the path. The effect of this is to oppose an insuperable barrier to the spirits that are dogging his footsteps and seeking to do him an injury.[3] A much more striking instance of the magical power which anybody can wield, if he only knows the appropriate charm, is the tail of a comet, which, in the opinion of the people of Yap, is a

Comets.

[1] S. Walleser, *l.c.* [2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 1058 *sq.*
[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1059.

signal sent up by mariners at sea to inform their friends on shore that they have been driven out of their course by adverse winds and may not be expected home for some time yet. Halley's comet rendered this kindly service not so very long ago to some natives of Yap, who had been working in the Pelew Islands and were carried away by a storm to Manilla, in the Philippines. They sent up the comet, like a rocket, into the sky to let their anxious relatives in Yap know that they were alive and well.[1]

Charms at felling a tree.

Again, certain sorts of trees are inhabited by spirits, and before they can be felled, a magician must be employed to induce the spirits to quit their sylvan abode. For this purpose he may take leaves of eleven different sorts, pound them up, and moisten the mash with coco-nut oil. Then he sprinkles or daubs the mash on the tree, praying the tree-spirits to leave it. Next day the woodmen come and cut down the tree.[2]

Amulets.

For constant use, to save himself the trouble of having at every turn to recite spells and perform ceremonies, a prudent man will provide himself with amulets or talismans, which he purchases for so much from a magician, who has endowed them with his own magical virtue. The amulet may consist of fish-bones, among which the spine of the sting-ray is particularly potent; or it may be leaves, or feathers, or strings, or bunches of fibres, and so on. A cautious man will carry half-a-dozen of these infallible remedies in his basket. One of them protects him from demons, another from sickness, a third from wicked men, and a fourth will render the basket so holy that nobody could pilfer the contents without drawing down on his own head some horrible calamity. Accordingly, this last charm furnishes absolute protection against theft, and it has the further advantage of allowing the owner to deposit stolen goods in it without incurring the smallest risk of detection. However, the fortunate possessor of these complicated charms has to pay a high price for them.[3]

Expiation of portents.

Extraordinary events, which partake of the character of portents and prodigies, such as earthquakes and eclipses

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1058 note 1. Compare W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 373.

[2] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 185 *sq.*, 367.

[3] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1059.

of the sun and moon, naturally call for special remedies, among which shouting, yelling, and blowing conch-shells are the most approved; for it is thought that these measures are calculated to frighten away the demon who is tampering with the earth and the celestial orbs.[1]

Magicians for all departments of life.

In all the events of life, great and small, the native applies to his philosopher and friend, the magician. And he need never be at a loss, for there are magicians for every one of the affairs that fall within the scope of human activity and suffering. There are magicians for fishing, for house-building, for cultivating the fruits of the earth, for war, for dancing, for sickness of every sort, and so on. If a man has only the paltry sum which the magician condescends to accept for his services, there is absolutely no limit to the possible accomplishment of his wishes. He can bring down bad luck on his adversaries, ward off all ill from himself, and control the weather to suit his convenience.

Rain-makers.

For there are magicians who claim to possess the power of causing rain to fall. Some ten years ago there were seven men of Tomil who professed to be rain-makers.[2] To cause a little rain one rain-maker will put a bowl of water beside a whale's bone; but if he wishes the rain to fall the whole day long he will pour the water over the bone. On the contrary, if his intention is to cause a drought, he will kindle a fire and hang the bone over it.[3] Another magician averts rain by blowing a shell trumpet and stabbing the air with the spine of a sting-ray, while at the same time he pronounces an incantation.[4]

Burial of a rain-maker; his skull kept by his successor.

When a rain-maker dies, he is buried, like a high priest or arch-magician, in a sitting posture, with the top of his head protruding from the ground and decorated with a large comb, such as is worn in dancing, and round his neck is fastened a noose, in order to allow his successor to sever the head from the body. For on the morning of the fifth day after the burial, just before daybreak, the rain-maker's successor must come and pull at the noose. If the head is thus wrenched from the body, the new rain-maker wraps

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1061.
[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1060; W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 365.
[3] W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 365.
[4] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 365 *sq.*

it up and carries it home to his house, where he keeps it as a sacred thing. Being in possession of the skull, he is also in possession of his predecessor's magical powers. But if decomposition is not sufficiently advanced to allow him to detach the skull from the body at the first attempt, he must return early in the morning of the seventh day and complete the operation.[1]

Succession to office of magician.

The office of a petty magician usually descends from father to son, who must learn betimes the incantations and rites. But if the magician has no son, or the son exhibits no taste or aptitude for the business, it sometimes happens that the magician imparts his professional knowledge to a kinsman or intimate friend, who succeeds him in his office. Many a wizard possesses one or more teeth which he extracted from the dead body of his master before burial, in order to inherit his magic skill.[2]

Taboos observed by magicians.

Every one of these magicians has to observe certain taboos very strictly. For example, the war magician must never eat anything that grows in a hostile district; and this rule the war magicians still acknowledge and obey, though war and open hostilities have long been things of the past.[3] It is also the custom of the magician to impose certain taboos on persons who seek his help; such taboos consist for the most part in prohibitions to eat certain foods and to have commerce with women.[4]

§ 10. *Divination*

Divination by counting knots in strips of coco-nut leaves.

When we consider the infinite multitude of evil spirits and the large supply of magicians who are ever ready to proffer their services in all the emergencies of life, we might imagine that a man would have great difficulty in discovering what spirit is troubling him, and what magician he should employ for his protection. However, this difficulty is easily obviated by recourse to divination, which is believed to supply the correct answer to any question that may be submitted to it. The mode of divination in Yap, as in the Mortlock Islands, is by counting the knots tied on strips

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1061.
[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1061.
[3] S. Walleser, *l.c.*
[4] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* p. 1062.

of coco-nut leaves, but the system of counting and of interpretation is so complicated that comparatively few men can learn it. The past masters of the art are the diviners (*tamaniwei*), whom the natives consult in important undertakings and in mishaps of every sort, but above all in cases of sickness. The people believe that every illness is caused by a spirit (*kan*) of some sort; hence when anybody falls sick the diviner is sent for to discover what particular spirit is doing the mischief, whether it be an ancestral spirit (*thagith*), or a clan spirit (*taliu-kan*), or any other of the numerous spirits which encompass and plague poor mortals on earth. When that point has been settled, it remains to ascertain the remedy, and for this purpose recourse is again had to divination. By counting up the oracular knots, according to the rules of his art, the diviner learns what magician must be called in to pronounce the necessary incantation, and what offering must be made to the spirit, in other words, what fee must be paid to the wizard, in order to ensure the recovery of the patient. The knots also frequently determine what particular kind of amulet—it may be a leaf, a bunch of fibres, or a fish-bone, especially a bone of the sting-ray—must be hung on the body of the sufferer to prevent the magical virtue of the incantation from evaporating.[1]

Disastrous effect of faith in divination.

The confidence which the native of Yap reposes in this elaborate system of divination is unbounded, and the consequences of his blind credulity are correspondingly disastrous. The system is rooted in his religion, which is a faith, absolute and unquestioning, in the omnipresence and the omnipotence of spirits. The steady decrease in the population is due in large measure to the diseases of many sorts which rage in the island, and so long as the diviner possesses the confidence which ought to be accorded to the physician, little or no amendment in this respect can be anticipated. It is not too much to say that their religion is slowly but surely exterminating the people of Yap. *Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.*[2]

[1] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 1062-1067. As to the system of divination by counting knots tied on strips of coco-nut leaves, see W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 374-376.

[2] S. Walleser, *op. cit.* pp. 1067 *sq.*

§ 11. *Tales and Legends*

Folk tales.

The natives of Yap possess a large body of traditionary lore in the form of folk tales which serve to illustrate their beliefs concerning the world and the spiritual beings by whom they imagine themselves to be surrounded. Many of these tales have been collected and published in recent years by a German scholar, Dr. W. Müller.[1] A few specimens of them may not be out of place in the present work.

The whale and the octopus.

1. *The Whale and the Octopus.*—A whale met an octopus and they swam side by side. The whale said, "Why don't you do me reverence? Don't you know that you are only an octopus? Of no fish am I afraid, and should I fear you?" The octopus answered, "We will fight each other. Name the time." The whale said, "In three months I'll send a messenger; then wait for me." Meanwhile the octopus gathered up all the mud into his body, till the messenger came and told him that the fight was to come off next day. The octopus saw the whale coming and spouting the sea up to the sky, and he said mockingly, "I'm a female octopus; I'm afraid, I'm afraid, female octopus that I am." Thereupon he puffed out the mud so that the water grew black and the whale could no longer perceive where the octopus was. Then the octopus shot out more mud in the whale's face, so that the whale could see nothing at all; after that, he thrust his arms into the nose, eyes and ears of the whale, and squeezed him against a rock till he was dead. Then he let him go.[2]

The spirit who dwelt underground.

2. *Of a Spirit, who dwelt under the Earth.*—In times of old this spirit used to catch men and to devour them after a month. A woman gave birth to a boy, who grew up with a cat. One day the boy and the cat would go out on their travels. Their provisions were packed on the cat's back, and together they repaired to the neighbourhood of

[1] Dr. W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 381-811 (*Ergebnisse der Südsee-Expedition 1908–1910*, herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. G. Thilenius; ii. *Ethnographie: B. Mikronesien*, Band II., Hamburg, L. Friederichsen & Co., 1918). In this valuable work most of the stories are printed in the original Yap text with literal interlinear German translations and followed by free German versions.

[2] W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 471.

the spirit on purpose to attack him. They wrangled as to which of them should open the battle, but at last they agreed that the boy should do it, while the cat was to wait till he winked to her to come to his help. Then they had a meal, and when they were quite gorged they proceeded to attack the spirit. As for the spirit, he thought to himself, "There is really no need for me to go on the prowl, since two people are coming to me whom I can devour." Now he was in the act of eating a human head. The boy sprang at him, and a fight began which lasted three months. When the boy felt his strength failing, the cat jumped in and bit through the spirit's neck. Then they took the corpse and carried it through all the villages, till they brought it to their own house.[1]

The girl who was fetched by a spirit.

3. *Story of a Yap girl who was fetched away by a Spirit.*—In days of old the girls used to go to play on the sea sands. There stood a stone, which was inhabited by a spirit (*kan*). He was wont to watch the girls at play, and when the children had gone back to the village, he always thought about one little girl. One day he stupefied her and took her with him to his house. In the evening the sisters and parents sought the girl, and when they did not find her, they thought that she was dead. But the girl grew up under the guardianship of the spirit, and one day he brought her back to the place where she used to play, and at the same time he told her that he would leave her, and that she would never meet him more. Then he made her look at her reflection in a coco-nut shell full of water, in order that by her likeness to her sisters she might know to whom to attach herself. So she watched the girls at play, and at evening she attached herself to her elder sister, who was returning home, and though her elder sister scolded her, she would not leave her. She opened the gate of the fence, which her elder sister had shut in her face; and in spite of her elder sister's chiding, she hung her basket on the peg, and remained weeping under the stone platform. When her elder sister had gone into the house to sleep, the younger sister

[1] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 491 *sq.* The story in this form cannot be ancient, for cats have only been introduced into Yap in very recent times. See W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 8.

stepped under the verandah, and curled herself up on a mat, which her elder sister had set before the door. Now when the parents came home, they did not know who she was; only when she mentioned her name did they recognize their lost daughter, and they wept much over her, as did also her elder sister. So she stayed with her parents, and when she came to womanhood she went to the place assigned for women at that time. On returning to the village she gave birth to a boy called Kapa. When he was a little older, he went with the other boys to race their canoes. In a race with one of them, he dived and bit a hole in the keel of his rival's canoe. Vexed at it, the other asked him, "Why did you do that? Was it because your mother is the child of a spirit?" Kapa went home weeping and told his mother. Reluctantly she at last revealed to him her secret and led him to the spirit's stone, where she wept till the spirit appeared and asked what she wanted. At first the boy would not go with her, because he feared to be devoured by the spirit; but at last he allowed himself to be persuaded and went. He abode in the house of the spirit, and when he was somewhat older, the spirit said to him, "Now we will go to my mother." They came to a place of great heat, where the boy refused to go any farther. The spirit put him in his hand and puffed. Then they went farther and came to a place of great cold, where the boy again refused to go farther. The spirit laid him under his armpits and warmed him. At last they came to the abode of the spirit's mother. The spirit declared that he was come to give to the boy for his own one of the two houses that were there. The spirit's mother said, "Very well; he shall have yonder the House of Health and Valour." Now the house was built on seven platforms of stone, surrounded by seven fences, and fitted out with all sorts of things. "Go now into the house to sleep," said the spirit. "At midnight I will come to wake you; then you must think where you wish me to transport your house." While the boy slept, the house ascended through the earth and came out on the surface of the ground. When the spirit came to learn the boy's wishes, the boy said, "Enlarge this part of the village and the fence." Then he went back into the house and slept till break of day. Before

Her son taunted with being the child of a spirit.

The magic house of Health and Valour.

any one was up in the village, he left the house and walked round the village with the spirit, after which he said, "I am content and I thank you. Now leave me." So he returned to the house without sleeping and awaited the sunrise. Then the boy with whom Kapa had had the quarrel arose, and coming forth from his dwelling, he observed the new house. He fetched a shell-trumpet and blew on it, and called the people together in a loud voice to tell them that the house belonged to him. But he did not know that Kapa was in the house. Then Kapa came out and gave the other a roll of mat money, begging him to accept it as an atonement for the quarrel. "It is not very good," said he, "but you know that I am a poor boy, and that my mother is the child of a spirit," and he gave him shell-money to boot. Then the people took counsel as to what they should do with Kapa, and they resolved that he should be the chief. So he went back into his house, and every time that he trod on one of the stone steps the thunder rolled and the lightning flashed alternately. Then he remained there.[1]

How Sisior was loved by an eel-man.

4. *The Story of Sisior.*—Sisior was a woman of Maki, whose mother had run away from her husband. Beside the bamboo fence of her house there was a pool in which she used to bathe at evening. When she had put off her grass apron, her tattooing was visible. An eel (a demon) remarked it, fell in love with the woman, and approached her. Sisior was afraid, and hurried out of the bathing pool.

While she slept at night, she dreamed that there came a handsome man, who said, "Why did you hurry away when I came to you in the fresh water?" She answered, "Where did you come to me?" "In the water pool," said he. "I did not see you," said she. "Did you not see me? I was an eel," quoth he. "Well, I did see you," quoth she, "but I was afraid of you. That is why I hurried away." "I beg of you," said he, "come to-morrow and do not hurry away." Next evening, when he approached her again in the bath and touched her, she was again afraid and hastened away. In the night he came and asked her why she had fled. He entreated her to come next day and to stay; if she loved him, she should not hasten away. That evening she bathed

[1] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 502 *sq.*

again. The eel approached, and when he touched her, she shut her eyes till he was gone.

How her son Sisior had an eel-skin on his back.

In the night he came and said, "I thank you for staying. So then you love me?" She answered, "I like you as you now are, but not as an eel." "Very well," said he; "then I will always come by night, for by day I cannot appear in human shape. Do not marry; I will be your husband." They passed the night together, and he asked her if she would have a child. She said, "Yes, but it cannot be." "You will go with child," said he. She bore a boy, who was also called Sisior. He was human, but on his back he had a piece of skin like the skin of an eel.

How Sisior was asked for turtle-shell.

The people of Maki used to bring to Gatsapar leaves of a certain sort, which at that time served instead of betel. Once the boy Sisior went with them. While the others repaired to their friends, he lagged behind by the way, for he had no friend. Then a woman took him in and gave him two coco-nuts in return for the leaves which he made over to her. The next time he visited the woman, there came in another woman and asked, "What has that man to do in your house?" "He brought me a little betel-pepper," said she. "Well," said the other, "I will ask him if he has any turtle-shell." "He has some," said the woman. "Then he shall fetch me a piece," said the other. Thereupon the friendly woman asked him if he had any, but he said that he had not.

How with the help of his father the eel Sisior found turtle-shell and brought it to Yap.

When he came to Maki he told his mother all that had happened. She said, "They have mocked you because of the eel on your back, wherein you are like your father." Then he wept and wished to know where his father lived. Because his mother could not tell him, he wept still more. In the night he slept, and when he woke, he continued to weep. At the approach of day the eel came and asked the woman why the lad was so sorrowful, and when he learned the reason he said, "Why did you not send him to me? To-morrow he shall come and bring two beams with him to that water-hole." The mother spoke to the boy, who was weeping again. She said, "Be of good courage; go and take two beams with you to yonder water-hole, and plunge into it. There you will see an eel with its mouth gaping wide.

When its mouth gapes to the utmost stretch, go into it. Thrust the beams into its jaws, and see what happens." He did so, and observed in the mouth of the eel how a shark came swimming. He stepped into the shark's mouth and swam with it away. They came to a sandy beach, where turtles were wont to cast their shells. There he stepped out and gathered turtle-shell till the mouth of the shark was full of it; then he returned in the shark's mouth. They landed at Gatsapar, and he went ashore and asked after the woman who wished to have the turtle-shell. He gave her some of it, and then the chiefs assembled to divide the rest. But he kept a piece for himself and then went back into the shark's mouth, and made the shark bring him to the eel, and there in the eel's mouth he came to fresh water once more. After that he married and got a little daughter, for whom he made a bracelet out of the turtle-shell which he had kept for himself. Once in the great house the other folk remarked the bracelet on her arm by the light of a bright fire, and they saw how good it was. Then they were angry and accused Sisior to the chiefs. The chiefs killed him because he had not given them the best piece of turtle-shell. But he it was who brought the turtle-shell to Yap. From there some of it went to Mogemeg, where they made a fishing-hook out of it, and with that hook was the island of Feïs fished up out of the bottom of the sea.[1]

How the six daughters of Dame Necklace climbed up a tree to heaven.

5. *The Story of Dame Necklace.*—A woman named Dame Necklace bore six daughters, every one of whom was called Dame Necklace.

Once on a time these girls wove grass petticoats for themselves, and when they had done so, the mother was to decide which of them had made the prettiest. She decided in favour of the youngest. Then they plaited baskets, and again the mother declared the basket of the youngest to be the best.

The sisters were jealous of the youngest and sought to deceive her. One of them said, "Fetch my betel-lime," and when the youngest was gone to fetch it, they hastened away in order to climb up a *rumo* tree to heaven. When they

[1] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 517 *sq.* For the story of the fishing up of the island of Feis, see *id.* pp. 526 *sq.*

were up aloft, one of them gave the tree a kick, so that it broke down, and when the youngest sister came to it, she wept for a long time. Then came a spirit to her and asked, "Are you of good courage?" When she said yes, he begged her to free his skin from the grass that grew on it. When that was done, he showed her the way, and she arrived in heaven, where she hid behind the house of the great god Yalafath in his field of turmeric. The god smelt her and went to look for her, and when he found her he adopted her as his child. Once when he went with her to a dance of the dwellers in heaven, her sisters remarked her and asked her for some food. She said, "I am not Dame Necklace. She is on earth, for when she came to the ladder, you had already broken it down." Then her sisters leaped down on earth and were killed, all five of them.[1]

The seven spirits and the *ruen* fishing.

6. *Story of the Seven Spirits or the Origin of* ruen *Fishing.*—Formerly there came seven spirits from the island of Rumun to the middle part of Yap. Whomsoever they found they slew. They settled in the villages, carried on fishing, and fetched their food from the fields. They also came to Nimar, where they took up their abode in the house of Paanin. Six of them went to fish, and one stayed behind to keep the house. All the folk of the village had fled to the woods; only one brave man, Daritsog the Elder, hid and spied on their manner of fishing. Then he went home, made himself a bamboo spear, and next day killed the one spirit who kept house when the others had gone a-fishing. He cut him through the middle, laid the pieces together, and then took himself off. When the other spirits came back, they thought at first that their comrade was asleep, but when they tried to waken him, they saw what had happened, and so they buried him. Gradually Daritsog killed others of the spirits that were left to mind the house, till only three of them survived. These went no more a-fishing. The man fought them and slew them. Then all the people came back to Nimar, and Daritsog taught them the way of *ruen* fishing, which has been a privilege of the village ever since.[2]

7. *The Origin of Fire and Pottery.*—In the olden time

[1] W. Müller, *Yap*, p. 547.

[2] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 603. The writer does not explain what is *ruen* fishing.

The origin of fire and pottery.

there was in Yap neither fire nor pottery. A woman called Deneman, in Dinai, a now deserted slave village near Gitam, had two children. One day she and her children fetched taro from the field; then she scraped it, cut it in pieces, and laid it in the sun to dry. Thereupon the Thunder came in the shape of a great dog and fell on a pandanus tree. He said to the woman, "Come and take me down," for he was afraid of the pandanus prickles. The woman answered, "No, I am afraid." "Do come, though," said the Thunder. Then she went and fetched him down. He saw the taro and asked, "What is that?" "My food," said she. He asked for two pieces, which he put for a while in his armpits. Then he gave them back to the woman, and lo! they were cooked and good to eat.

The Thunder said, "Fetch me a branch of the tree *ar*," and she gave it him. He pealed the bark off, and put the stick under his arm into his armpit, through which he drew it slowly. Then the branch was quite dry. He cut it in two, pointed the one half, and made a groove in the other. Thus he made a fire-drill. Then he made fire by friction and roasted the taro. After that they went to the house and slept. Early next day they went again to the field to work, and the Thunder accompanied them. He said to the woman, "Fetch me some earth; there must be no stone in it." He took the earth and showed her the shape of a pot. Then he taught her a charm that would make the pot strong and last long, if the buyer paid a good price for it; and he taught her another charm that would make the pot soon fall to pieces, if the buyer drove a hard bargain. Then he took much taro and cooked it, and it was very good to eat. After that they went home again to sleep. Next morning the Thunder had vanished. But the woman always cooked by night, that nobody should see her at it.

Then a man came, who saw that the food was not as other food, and he asked the reason of it. And many people came to ask, but the woman did not betray the secret. Then they set a watch and observed her day and night. One night, when they saw the light of the fire, they broke the wall of the house and forced an entrance into it. One man laid hold of the fire and burned himself, for he

did not know its effect. Then they took firewood and conveyed the fire into the other houses; thereupon they ordered the woman to make pots and promised her a great reward. But they had not paid for the fire.[1]

The origin of the Dolphin totem.

8. *The Dolphin Totem.*—In Tagam, the great house of Vuluol, a dance took place. At evening, while Tholoor, a man of the village, sat on a palm-tree, tapping it for toddy, two dolphins came, hid their fins in the sand, turned themselves into maidens, and went to the dance. When it grew dark, Tholoor came down, sought for the fins of one of the dolphins, and took them with him to the village. But the fins of the other dolphin he did not find. Next morning when he went again to tap for toddy, the two maidens were already there and looked for their fins. One of them went with her fellows into the sea, but the other stayed behind and wept. The man took her as his wife to the village, where she gave birth to two daughters. She found the fins which he had hidden, threw them into a taro patch to make them supple, and went with her two daughters to the beach. As the children wept continually, Tholoor came thither, and the mother went away from them. He took them to the village and brought them up (and they became the mothers of the Dolphin totemic clan).[2]

The foregoing tale clearly belongs to the widespread type of story known as the Swan Maiden or Beauty and the Beast. Such stories are often told in connexion with totemism.[3]

The mouse-woman and the great flood.

9. *The Great Flood caused by the Mouse* (*Origin of the Mouse Totem*).—Thinirigog, a man of Tamil (Tomil), went to the neighbouring slave village of Davots. There, on a stone in a grassy field, sat a girl watching the people of Ma, who were flying kites. When Thinirigog drew near, she vanished under a rock, and he looked for her in vain.

He knotted a net and sent the people of Ma word that next morning they should again fly kites, because he wished to catch a bird. So next day when the sport was to begin, Thinirigog went first, hid behind the stone, and when the

[1] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 606 *sq.* For another version of this legend see F. W. Christian, *The Caroline Islands*, pp. 320 *sq.*

[2] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 618 *sq.*

[3] See *The Golden Bough*, Part III., *The Dying God*, pp. 124 *sqq.*

girl appeared, he threw the net over her, took her with him to the village, and made her his wife. But the girl's mother followed him in the shape of a mouse. The girl bore a daughter. One day, when the mother wished to go to cook, she left the child on the ground. Then came the grandmother mouse, spoke some words, and sprang at the child, whereat the infant laughed.

When Thinirigog saw the mouse, he came and killed it, and wrapped it in a coco-nut leaf. But when the woman came back, she cried, "Why have you done that? You have killed my mother. Now a typhoon will come in seven days. But go and bury her in the place Taviol." He did so, and set her cooking-pot there and some coco-nuts besides.

Now when, after seven days, the typhoon burst, they went to the taboo-place or sacred grove.[1] In the middle of the night the flood came. Thinirigog went out, dipped his hand in the water, and tasted it. It was salt water. His wife said, "I think nevertheless that we shall both escape with our lives." She squeezed out the milk of a scraped coco-nut, boiled it, pronounced a spell over it, and let the milk drip into the sea. Then the flood retreated, and in the morning they saw that the land had been swept away, while in the south it had been washed up at Nimegil. A man of Onean hastened thither and buried a staff in the sand. Then came a man from Rul and claimed the land for himself. When the man from Onean appealed to the stick which he had buried as evidence of his right to the land, the man from Rul said, "Very good, that little bit of land may be yours, but the whole belongs to me." Since then Onean has the lordship of Lei, but the whole of Nimegil is the property of Rul. But that girl became the ancestress of the Mouse totemic clan.[2]

Dadavun and the sea-spirit Dadarui.

10. *The Story of Dadarui and Dadavun.*—In the days of old a man Dadavun always planted bananas; then came the spirits of the sea to fish, and when they had done, they went into the village and broke off Dadavun's pawpaws. He consulted the oracle of the knotted coco-nut leaves,[3]

[1] Called *taliu* in the Yap language. See above, pp. 177 *sqq.*

[2] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 622 *sq.*

[3] See above, pp. 189 *sq.*

which told him to go to his garden a little before daybreak. He did so, and hid in the garden, with a spear and a shell-trumpet. When he heard voices, he stood stock-still, till one of the spirits came to pluck bananas. Then he leaped on the spirit and seized him. Thereupon Dadarui (for that was the spirit's name) besought him not to hurt him, and Dadavun thought to himself, "Very good."

Next day the sea-spirit Dadarui came again and brought fish, for which he received bananas; and Dadavun said to him, "Would it be possible for me to go with you?" The spirit answered, "To-morrow wait for me on the beach." Next day he came with a companion and said to Dadavun, "When we both dive under, then you shall dive with us." But when Dadavun tried to do it, he lost his breath and returned to the village. Next day the two sea-spirits came again, and this time they took the man between them when they dived. When his breath began to fail, the spirits gripped the water fast, so that it stopped, and they arrived at the house of Dadarui. He said to the man, "Go and cook for us." And when he went he saw that the lid of the pot was made of fish. He began to eat it, until Dadarui asked him what he was doing there. "I am eating the lid of the pot," said he. Then Dadarui gave him another bit of a pot lid, but he said to the man, "In Yap there is a thing that you must not bring hither," meaning the poisonous creeper which the natives call *yuv*. But when once they came to the village and cut up the fish which they had caught, Dadavun put the poison on the place where was the food of Dadarui; and when they had done eating Dadarui cried out, "Oh, I must die!" When he was dead, the flood came, and the people were drowned.[1]

How the way from the underworld to earth was stopped up.

11. *The Way from the Underworld to Earth.*—In Nimpol, where is the opening through the reef of the village of Okau, there is a very deep hole, which extends underground, and has an opening upwards in the taro patch of Moal. In olden times the inhabitants of the underworld (*Ar*) used to come to Moal to steal. One day a man of Okau, named Oayan, set himself to watch and saw two spirits come from the underworld; he caught one of them,

[1] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 648 *sq.*

while the other ran away. He made friends with his captive, and they came to an understanding with each other by means of marks which they made on the path. The man of Okau gave taro to the spirit, whenever he came, and received fish instead. One day he was asked by his friend, the spirit from the underworld, to go down with him into the nether regions, and down he went. They came to his friend's house, where there were many fish; nay, the beams, walls, and roof of the house were all made of fish. But the spirit, the owner of the house, told the man from the upper earth that he must not bring poisonous creepers with him into the netherworld. Nevertheless the man once brought them, and in consequence the house collapsed, the fish shivered and died, and the spirit himself died also. When on his return to earth the man came to the hole at Nimpol, the hole contracted and strangled him. There he lies as a stone to this day; but the way to the underworld exists no more.[1]

12. *The Story of the Earth and of Men.*—In olden times there grew a solitary *kal* tree out of the sea. It was so lofty that with its top it touched the sky, where there was a door through which one could enter. At the trunk of the tree sat a crab called Efra, who had a daughter named Meré. This Meré had a son, who was a human being. When he was big enough to walk, he tried to climb up the tree, but he did not get very far. Fear fell on him, and he turned back. For three days he continued to make attempts, but on the fourth day his fright vanished, and he arrived in heaven. There stood two club-houses called Folroman,[2] with their narrow sides turned to each other. Between them the way led to the house of the god Yelafath,[3] to whom the boy wished to go. But in Folroman there were many spirits (*kan*), who killed him. He lay on the ground, with his arms stretched out, and the spirits lifted him up and nailed him to the beams of one of the two club-houses. On the third day his mother Meré climbed up to heaven to look after the boy. Standing by the dust-heap

The story of Meré and of her son who was crucified.

[1] W Müller, *Yap*, pp. 658 *sq.*

[2] Otherwise Falraman. See above, pp. 166 *sq.*

[3] Otherwise Yalafath. See above, pp. 166, 168.

she observed the Crucified, and wept bitterly. The god Yelafath saw her and sent his son Danimam to enquire the cause of her sorrow. The little one did as he was bid. She said, "I weep for my dead son." The little one reported it to his father. Then Yelafath, clad in a white robe, went to Folroman and said to the spirits, "I will give you my robe, if you will give the dead body up to me." They answered, "We have a robe, and we will not give you the child." Then he offered them a red cloth that reached from his house to Folroman; in return for that he received the dead body of the boy. For five days had the body hung on the cross, yet did it not stink; but when Yelafath laid it in the mother's arms, it began to smell. Then said he to Danimam, "Tell the woman that she is to go down again." She answered, "I cannot carry the child by myself, he is very big." Then Yelafath took some medicine which he poured into the mouth and eyes of the child, whereby he came to life again. But he was much swollen by reason of the gases of corruption. Then God gave him another medicine, whereby he recovered the natural human form.

Yelafath gave the woman sweet potatoes and a coconut shell full of the earth of heaven. When she came to the door, she perceived that in the earth were many very small stones. She threw them out of heaven's door, and strewed the earth on the tree. Then out of the stones were made lands. The land in the middle was called Reik. The mother and son descended on it, and Yelafath gave them two nails and a cat to take with them. The cat was to catch mice, and the nails were to be stuck in her eyes, in order that she might see by night. That is why the cat has nails in her eyes to this day. But the God had commanded them to come back after seven days. Meré did so, but the son did not come with her. Then the God said, "You shall live for ever like a spirit (*kan*), but your son, when he is old, must die." Thereupon she descended again to earth, and had another daughter and grandchildren, and then there were many men on earth.[1]

[1] W. Müller, *Yaṕ*, pp. 660 *sq.* This story bears on the face of it traces of missionary, or at all events Christian, influence. The name Meré, the mother of the Crucified, is only Mary spelt differently. Dr. Müller prints it Měrḗ[1].

Story of the Sun, Moon, and Stars.

13. *The Sun, Moon, and Stars.*—In days of old the Sun and Moon lived in heaven. They used to tap palms for toddy. A whetstone that was there belonged to them both in common. One day the Sun whetted his shell-knife on that stone and spoiled the stone in so doing. Then the two quarrelled, and the Sun took some of the powder created by whetting the knife on the stone and flung it in the face of the Moon, whereupon the Moon took a blossom-spathe (*Blütenrispe*) of a coco-nut palm, and struck the Sun on the face with it. Thus the face of the Moon was dirtied, while the face of the Sun was touzled. Then said the Sun to the Moon, "We shall meet henceforth no more. Go thou thy way by night, and I will go by day." "Good," said the Moon, "do thou shine on the foods of my festal seasons."

The Moon gave birth to a mouse. That mouse gave birth to Thunder and Lightning, the Rainbow, and the Waterspout, and last of all to a young unmarriageable girl called Lamalul. This Lamalul gave birth to Peloolap and Yelafath. Peloolap heated a fire-stone and uttered a spell over it, whereupon it burst and the pieces shot up into the sky in the form of stars.[1]

[1] W. Müller, *Yap*, pp. 744 *sq.* I have abridged the genealogies in this tale and omitted the long sequel (pp. 745-756).

CHAPTER VIII

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AMONG THE PELEW ISLANDERS

§ 1. *The Pelew Islands*

The Pelew Islands, their situation.

THE Pelew or Pelau Islands are a chain of small islands stretching in a north-easterly and south-westerly direction, between 6° and 8° North latitude, and between 134° and 135° East longitude.[1] With the exception of the small and isolated island of Tobi, distant some four hundred miles to the south-west, the Pelew Islands are the most westerly group of Micronesia. They lie about six hundred miles due east of the Philippines, and at about the same distance due north of New Guinea. Their area is variously estimated at two hundred and at three hundred and forty-six square miles. They consist of one large and a few small islands, of which several are high and mountainous, while the rest are low and of coral formation. The largest Island, Babeltuap (Baobelthoab), is thirty miles long.[2] Great and dangerous coral reefs encircle the islands. On the western side of the islands the reef lies at a considerable distance from the shore, forming with the islands a lagoon, which is at its widest and deepest opposite Babeltuap; farther south the lagoon is

[1] G. Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands* (Dublin, 1788), p. 288; F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, p. 4. I follow the latter writer in regard to the latitude and longitude. As to the name, which is variously rendered, see J. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Karolinischen Inselgruppe*, Heft I., *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 33 *sq.* According to Kubary, our best authority on the islands, the only correct way of spelling the name is Pelau. The Germans commonly spell the name Palau.

[2] *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, ninth edition, v. 125; F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 551.

studded with banks of coral. On the eastern side of the islands, on the other hand, the reef skirts the coast very closely.[1]

Description of the islands.

The mountains of the high islands are composed of coralline limestone in the south, where they reach a considerable elevation; towards the middle and north of the chain the coral is displaced for long stretches by volcanic rocks, particularly trachyte and basaltic lava, and it is in these stretches that the mountains attain their greatest height. In the volcanic islands the decomposition of the rocks has produced a fruitful soil: the vegetation is luxuriant: groves of mangroves skirt the coast: the slopes of the mountains are clothed with forest: the summits are covered only with grass, fern, and bushes. The coralline islands have also fine woods, which furnish timber for shipbuilding, though the trees are woven together by a dense tangle of creepers. The volcanic islands have plenty of fresh water in the shape of ponds and small streams. Among the mountains are broad and beautiful valleys, spreading before the eye many delicious prospects. The climate, for the tropics, is healthy.[2]

§ 2. *The Islanders and their Mode of Life*

The islanders a mixed race.

The natives of the Pelew Islands appear to be a mixed race, formed by the fusion of a Malay or Polynesian stock with a Papuan strain. This mixture is manifested in their hair and the cast of their features, as well as in their institutions and language.[3] Their colour varies from a yellowish brown, through a copper brown, to a deep brownish black, though the native hue is often hidden by skin diseases and the yellowish red dye, prepared from turmeric, with which the people love to smear their bodies. The hair is black, sometimes glistening, but oftener dull and with a tinge of brown; the black glistening hair is mostly smooth or slightly wavy; the dull brown-black hair, on the other hand, is always frizzly and grows in great locks, which is characteristic of the Papuan people. The evidence for the

[1] C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 361 *sq.*

[2] C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 362 *sq.*; G. Keate, *op. cit.* p. 303.

[3] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln im Stillen Ocean* (Leipzig, 1873), pp. 361-372.

mixture of Malayan or Polynesian with Papuan blood is still more conspicuous in the features of the face, particularly in a Jewish type of nose, which is characteristically Papuan but is totally lacking in genuine Malays.[1] As the Pelew Islands are about equidistant from New Guinea and the Philippines, it is not unnatural that the population should exhibit a blending of elements drawn from both these quarters.

Agriculture.

The natives of the Pelew Islands depend for their subsistence in large measure on their taro plantations, which they cultivate with great care. Yams are unknown and bread-fruit scarce. Several kinds of bananas grow in the islands, but the natives do not appreciate the importance of the fruit as an article of diet, and pay little attention to its cultivation.[2] The sugar-cane appears to have been indigenous before the arrival of Europeans, but its cultivation, like that of the banana, is inconsiderable ; a few scattered plantations of it may be found here and there ; half at least of them are the work of women.[3]

Taro plantations.

On the other hand, the taro plantations are essential to the existence of the petty states into which the islands are, or used to be, divided ; and however small and decayed the State, and however neglected its public buildings and roads, a considerable stretch of low ground in the neighbourhood of the village is always covered with beds of taro, which are kept clean and neat, and have been under cultivation from time immemorial. Moisture is essential to the successful cultivation of the tuber, for the beds have to be kept under water. The natural supply of water is not sufficient for the purpose, despite the humidity of the climate ; hence it is necessary to resort to artificial irrigation. The water of neighbouring brooks is diverted to the fields by dikes, which dam it up where it is wanted, and let it out by sluices when it is in excess.[4]

[1] K. Semper, *op. cit.* pp. 361-363. The Papuan strain in the Pelew Islanders is denied by C. E. Meinicke (*op. cit.* ii. 365). I prefer to follow Dr. Semper, who had ample means of forming an opinion from close personal observation. But Dr. Semper appears not to distinguish sufficiently between the Papuan and Melanesian races ; for after dwelling on the Papuan characteristics of the people he goes on to speak (pp. 369-372) of the Melanesian element in their language.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels* (Leyden, 1895), pp. 156, 162.

[3] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 162 *sq*

[4] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 157.

Cultivation of taro in the hands of women.

The cultivation of taro, the most important branch of Pelew agriculture, is entirely in the hands of women; and this circumstance, it has been suggested, may have contributed materially to win for women the high position which they occupy in the social life of the people. They

High social position of women.

are reported to be politically and socially the superiors of the men. They bear the title of "Mothers of the Land" (*adhalal a pelu*). Descent is traced through them. The eldest women of each family are esteemed and treated in their lifetime as the equals of the gods (*kalids*), and exercise a decisive influence in the conduct of public affairs. No chief would venture to take a decision on matters of importance without consulting the "Mothers of the Family" (*adhalal a blay*).[1] In the cultivation of taro it is necessary to invoke the help of the gods (*kalids*); and this duty devolves on one of the women every morning, before they betake themselves to their labour in the fields. The deities to whom the women pray are naturally conceived and

Driving out the taro disease.

addressed as women and mothers. And when the taro plantations are attacked by disease, the women gather about the priestess of the local goddess in the council-house; from there they go in procession to the beach, dancing and singing songs to the effect that all the various diseases that attack the taro are to be cast out and driven away. Thus, for example, the leader of the band will sing, "And the sickness, when it comes," to which the chorus responds, "Cast it out!" Then the leader will chant the names of the various sorts of diseases or of the insects which infest the crops; to which the chorus will again answer with the refrain, "Cast it out!" Finally, the leader will sing, "Cast it out to Augyaur," and the chorus will chime in with the response, "That he may pound it small!" In this way they are believed to dance the taro disease out of the country and apparently across the sea to Augyaur.[2]

Cultivation of tobacco, turmeric, and betel.

The natives also cultivate tobacco, turmeric, and betel, for these three plants furnish them with what they regard

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 159. Compare *id.*, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 38 *sq.*

[2] J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels*, pp. 159-161. The Pelew word for god is spelled *kalid* by Semper, and variously *kalid*, *kalith*, and *kaliθ* by Kubary. I have adopted the first of these spellings throughout.

as indispensable luxuries. They are passionately fond of smoking cigarettes rolled up in banana leaves. When a man is about to plant tobacco he invites the gods of the ground to go away to some other place, because he wishes to plant tobacco on that particular plot of land.[1] Turmeric is cultivated by the women, who observe at planting it the same sort of ritual which the men observe at planting tobacco.[2] The betel plant, which grows wild in Yap, thrives only under cultivation, and that with difficulty, in the Pelew Islands. But the natives are passionately fond of betel-chewing, and every householder cultivates the plant in the neighbourhood of his house, where it climbs up the trunks of the trees.[3]

Fish and fishing.

Fish form the most important part of the animal diet of the Pelew Islanders. Their coasts abound in fish, and the islands supply them with ample materials for fishing tackle, and excellent timber for canoes. With these natural advantages the natives are expert fishermen, indeed the best in Micronesia.[4] But skill in handling the line, coupled with an exact knowledge of the fishing-ground and of the habits of the fish, is not enough to make a man a master-fisherman (*koreomel*); he must conform to many superstitious customs and know many spells to bind the sea-gods before he can lay claim to that coveted title; in short, he must be, so to say, a priest of the fishing religion.[5] As in many other islands, the fisherman is bound to continence during the fishing; a breach of the rule would inevitably spoil the catch. Prayers or incantations are recited and offerings are presented to various gods both before the canoe puts to sea and while it is out on the great waters. These religious rites are especially incumbent on fishermen when they go out to catch sharks on the open sea; such expeditions are invested with a special solemnity, and it is the master-fisherman (*koreomel*) who officiates on these occasions as the intercessor with the sea-gods.[6] But the men who understand the ritual of shark-fishing are few in number. When Kubary lived in the islands in the latter half of the

Magic of fishing.

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 163.
[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 164.
[3] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 165.
[4] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 123.
[5] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 125, 127.
[6] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 127-132.

nineteenth century there were only three of these sages. The greatest of the three, the son of a former king of Molegoyok, was believed to be endowed with supernatural powers over the sea; thus he could calm the stormy waves, and by observation of the clouds and of wrack drifting on the face of the waters he could foretell what would come to pass.[1]

Turtles and cocks.

The turtle is sacred to the gods; hence its flesh may only be eaten as a sacrifice in case of illness. The cock is sacred to the war-god Horgim; accordingly its flesh was a forbidden food to people generally, but particularly to all men who had taken the head of an enemy in war. However, in modern times, through contact with foreigners, this custom has been disregarded, especially by women.[2]

Pottery.

The making of earthenware pots and the cooking of food in them were known to the natives and practised by them long before they came into contact with foreigners.[3] At various places in the island of Babeltuap (Baobelthaob) the art of pottery has been practised exclusively by women from time immemorial. The clay is fashioned into shape by hand, without the use of a wheel; the pots are fired very simply by being placed on a pile of burning wood and left there till the fire goes out.[4]

Weaving unknown.

On the other hand, the loom, which was in use in the Central Carolines, was unknown in the Pelew Islands. Even the art of making cloth by beating the bark of the bread-fruit tree, an art which was widely diffused in Polynesia, was but little practised by the Pelew Islanders; among them it was apparently confined to the making of loin-cloths for men.[5]

Mats.

The art of plaiting mats and skirts for women out of vegetable fibre, leaves, and bark was in the hands of women alone.[6]

Bows and arrows.

Bows and arrows were used by the Pelew Islanders in their favourite sport of pigeon-shooting, but never in war. These weapons are characteristic of the Melanesian race, and their occurrence among the Pelew Islanders is one more indication of a Melanesian element in the population.[7]

A peculiar ornament worn as a bracelet by men in the

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 128.
[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 168.
[3] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 198.
[4] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 199.
[5] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 209.
[6] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 209 *sqq.*
[7] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 117 *sq.*; K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 366.

Pelew Islands is the atlas vertebra of the dugong; its native name is *klilt*. Such an ornament is very rare and costly. Few men have the means to buy or procure it; many chiefs are without it, but on the other hand many young men who have rich fathers or uncles possess the coveted decoration. Contrary to an opinion current in Europe, the bracelet is not a badge of rank or office; it cannot be won by merit or forfeited by crime. Its high value depends on its rarity, and hence on the difficulty of procuring it. The dugong is in a sense the property of the head chief; for when the creature has been captured and brought alive to land, the head chief has the first right to purchase it. If he declines to exercise his right, the animal is sold to any friendly state, and the price is distributed among the crew who caught the creature. A whole dugong is a very expensive luxury which few chiefs can afford, for the price is exceedingly high; to buy the vertebra alone, without the rest of the animal, is another matter, but still it is only possible for wealthy people. Most men who flaunt the precious bracelet procured it at the cheaper rate.[1] However, a very rich chief makes it a point of honour to buy several whole dugongs in his lifetime, in order that his sons or the children of his female relatives may wear the bracelets. He bestows one of the bracelets on his son, who retains it as his private property; but more distant relatives are allowed to have the bracelets only on loan, and they are bound to return them to the chief on his demand.[2]

The *klilt*, an ornament made from a vertebra of the dugong.

As the natives set the highest value on these ornaments, the owners are naturally anxious not to lose them. Accordingly, to obviate the risk of their slipping off the arm, they make the opening in the vertebra so small that it barely permits of the passage of the hand. Hence to put one of these bracelets on or off is a difficult and painful operation, which often involves injury to the hand and sometimes even the loss of several fingers. To stretch the fingers and so reduce the bulk of the hand, they are made

The operation of putting on the ornament.

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 175 *sq.* Compare K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 114, note **, who seems to be mistaken in speaking of the vertebra in question as the badge of an order which the king alone could confer, and which could not be obtained by purchase.

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 178 *sq.*

fast by cords to a post or other fixed object; whereupon the friends of the sufferer, gripping him fast by the body, pull him with all their might in the opposite direction, while others are engaged in squeezing his hand through the bracelet, employing as the instruments of torture a couple of wooden blocks, with which they hammer away till at last the operation is successfully accomplished. Once a man has had a bracelet put on in this fashion, it is no wonder that he is very unwilling to put it off again; and as a rule nothing will induce him to submit himself a second time to the hands of the tormentors except the express order of the chief or accession to the office of head chief, which obliges him to assume the bracelet of his predecessor in office. Should the injury sustained by the hand in putting on the bracelet prove dangerous, leave of the chief must be obtained to smash the bauble with a stone and so release the sufferer. To remove the bracelet from a dead man is easy, for the shrivelled hand slips readily through the narrow opening in the vertebra. But when the dead man was a foe slain in battle, the hand was usually hacked off and the bracelet dedicated to a god.[1] The English sailor, Captain Henry Wilson, of the India packet *Antelope*, who was wrecked on the islands and lived for three months among the natives in 1783, was invested with the bracelet by the local king of the island where the shipwreck took place. The passage of the vertebra over the captain's wrist appears to have been effected without much difficulty or suffering, the bone having been first rasped to enlarge the opening, and when it was safely on the Englishman was solemnly informed by the king "that the bone should be rubbed bright every morning, and preserved as a testimony of the rank he held amongst them; that this mark of dignity must, on every occasion, be defended valiantly, nor suffered to be torn from his arm but with the loss of life."[2]

Antiquity of the custom.

The custom of wearing a vertebra of the dugong on the wrist is a very ancient one in the islands, and to explain it the natives tell a story of a woman who incurred her

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 183 *sq.*

[2] G. Keate, *An Account of the Pelew Islands*, pp. 234 *sq*

mother's wrath, and, being cursed by her, was turned into a dugong.[1] But no religious significance attaches to the ornament. The head of a family is free to sell it at his pleasure.[2]

The men's club-houses.

Of the native structures in the Pelew Islands the most remarkable are the men's club-houses, called *bays*, which are also described as assembly-houses and council-houses. Such a club-house (*bay* or *bai*) is a quadrangular building about one hundred feet long by thirty-five or forty feet broad, with a very high gable-roof, the lower ends of which almost touch the ground, so that one has to stoop in order to enter by either of the two doors in the side walls. The gable ends, under the projecting eaves, are adorned with painted sculptures in relief, and the cross-beams in the interior are similarly decorated.[3] These club-houses always stand on large open quadrangles paved with stone.[4]

The building of a club-house.

The erection of one of these large edifices is a work of great labour, for which the assistance of a neighbouring village is often solicited and obtained. When the promise of help has been given, the next thing is to engage the services of a master-builder (*takalbay*).

The master-builder: his knowledge of divine things.

Now the science of a master-builder consists not so much in familiarity with the mere technical processes of construction as in the knowledge of divine things, particularly of the best modes of dealing with the gods of the forest and of the timber, whose domain has to be invaded and their property cut down and removed in order to furnish building materials for the new house. Before these liberties can be taken with the sacred trees and timber, it is essential to obtain the permission of the divine owners; for it is easy to imagine the fate of sacrilegious persons who should dare to inhabit a house built of wood that had been felled in the forest without the consent of the sylvan deities.

Need of spells or incantations in all arts and crafts.

This distinction between mere technical skill and what we may call practical divinity runs through the whole gamut of the arts and crafts in the Pelew Islands. Thus, many women, we are told, understand the vulgar business of planting taro, but few are acquainted

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 180 *sq.*

[2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 184.

[3] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 90; F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, p. 12.

[4] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 158.

with the spells or prayers which it is essential to utter on that occasion. The fisherman has his incantations for the sea, and the hunter for the chase, as well as the master-builder for the forest from which he gets his timber; in short, every business has its special deity (*kedul*) and its special mode of dealing with him or her. People who venture to recite the incantations without possessing the necessary knowledge of divinity are never successful in their undertakings, for they always incur the wrath of the gods.[1]

Ceremonies at cutting down trees for timber in house-building.

Before the master-builder betakes himself with his company to the forest to hew down the first tree, he devotes the preceding night to invoking what Europeans regard as the constellation of the Pleiades, but what the better-informed natives of the Pelew Islands know to be a man called Mesikt, who once dwelt on earth and built a canoe, but who afterwards migrated with his people and now accompanies the moon in the sky. Next morning the master-builder repairs to the forest, and, going apart from the company who follow him, he chooses the tree on which the first blow of the axe is to fall. Before delivering the stroke he invokes the four deities of his craft, informing them of the intention to build a new club-house, begging them to quit the trees that are about to be felled, and entreating them not to visit the workmen with sickness, but to keep far from them sloth, brawls, envy, and evil magic. As an offering he lays some turmeric at the foot of the tree, and then standing aside he marks how his men ply their axes against the trunk, drawing from his observation a forecast of the future fortunes of the building. He can tell, too, whether his prayers or spells have had the desired effect of banishing the gods from the trees, or whether, on the contrary, they still linger in the fallen trunks; the sign of their continued presence in the wood is given by little heaps of dust. If the trees creak in falling, he says, "The trees feel pain to-day, they weep," and the rest of the work is put off to a more favourable moment.[2]

Ceremony on the completion of a club-house.

But the most important duty of the master-builder remains to be performed when the club-house is built and ready for occupation. For despite the care he took, at the

[1] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 227. [2] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 227 *sq.*

felling of the timber, to induce the tree-gods to quit the trees, it may happen that some of them turned a deaf ear to his entreaties and are still lurking in the planks, posts, and beams of the house. The consequence of that would, of course, be fatal; death and destruction would dwell in that house. To guard against this dreadful possibility, the master-builder now engages in a general exorcism, adjuring and conjuring all the gods of the timber, without exception, to quit the house and not to trouble the builders and the future inhabitants of the edifice. Having thus secured, as far as is humanly possible, the welfare of the house and its inmates, the master-builder receives his fee and takes his departure, his employers dismissing him with thanks and a promise to engage his services next time they undertake to build a club-house.[1]

Division of the people into independent communities, each comprising a number of clans.

The inhabitants of the Pelew Islands are divided into a number of independent communities or petty states, each with its own village (*pelu*) and its own chief (*rupak*) or chiefs. Every community or village is composed of a number of families or clans (*blays*), the eldest male members of which are the chiefs (*rupaks*), while the eldest female members are the chiefesses (*rupakeldils*). The other members of the clans form the people, who are distributed in certain association or clubs, called *kaldebekels*. The name is derived from *kaldil*, "share," and *kabekel*, "a war-canoe"; for all the members of a *kaldebekel* are assigned to a particular canoe, which they are obliged to man in time of war and on other occasions. The women are divided into similar associations or clubs, which bear the same name, not unaptly, because on certain festal occasions the women also are expected to man the war-canoes.[2] The normal number of clans living together in one village or state is twenty.[3]

The clans exogamous and apparently totemic.

The clans are exogamous; in other words, no man may marry or have sexual intercourse with a woman of his own clan (*blay*); and descent of the clan runs in the

[1] J. S. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 237.

[2] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Palauer* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 33-35. The name of these associations is erroneously given as *clöbbergöll* by Dr. K. Semper (*Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 36 *sq.*, etc.).

[3] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 63; *id.*, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian, *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde* (Berlin, 1888), i. 16.

female line; in other words, the children belong to the clan of their mother, not to the clan of their father.[1] We have met with a similar social organization among the Marshall Islanders, the Mortlock Islanders, and in Ponape and Yap;[2] from which we may infer with a considerable degree of probability that it is, or was formerly, universal in Micronesia, even where the institution has not been recorded. Our best authority on the social life of the Pelew and Caroline Islanders, J. S. Kubary, goes farther and affirms his belief that the like form of social organization, in exogamous clans with descent in the female line, must originally have prevailed among the inhabitants of all the islands of the Pacific,[3] though few traces of it have survived among the Polynesians.[4] Further, among the Pelew Islanders the clans appear to be totemic; for each clan has its sacred animal, bird, or fish, in which perhaps, though this is not certain, the souls of dead members of the clan may formerly have been supposed to lodge. Among these sacred creatures or clan totems, as we may call them, are sea-eels, crabs, and parrots.[5]

High social position of women.

As we have seen, women occupy a very high position and exercise great influence in the social and political life of the people. Every clan traces its origin to a woman; hence women are called the Mothers of the Clan as well as the Mothers of the Land. Their predominance is as marked in religion as in civil affairs; for we are told that in the clan it is only the gods of the women that count, and in every village there is, side by side with the local god, a goddess, who often bears simply the title of Amlahel, that is, "She who gives birth," "the Mother."[6] Yet in spite of the respect thus paid to their sex, the young unmarried women

Prostitution of unmarried girls.

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 35.

[2] Above, pp. 78, 108, 147, 163.

[3] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 36.

[4] In Tonga nobility was traced in the female line; and in the Hervey Islands the clans are reported to have been exogamous, but with descent in the male line. See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 75, 223.

[5] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 12-16, 20 *sq.*, 38, 68; K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 87, 166, 193 *sq.* According to Semper (p. 87 note), these sacred animals of the Pelew Islanders "are completely identical with the *totems* of the American Indians and the *kobongs* of the Australians." The native Pelew names for these sacred animals are *kalid*, *adalsahel*, and *kasingl*. Of these terms the first (*kalid*) is the most general and is the nearest equivalent to our "god."

[6] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 38 *sq.*, 40.

lead a life which, judged by our European standards, is in the last degree dissolute and immoral. They are regarded as a source of income to their families, and a mother waits with impatience for the time when her daughter will be able to go out into the world and earn money by prostitution. She even anticipates the time by robbing the girl of her virginity with her own hand and instructing her in vice. Thus encouraged, the girl soon makes the carnal acquaintance of all the men of the community who can afford to pay for her favours, always with the exception of the men of her own clan, with whom sexual commerce is forbidden; but she never has connexion twice with the same man. When she has thus gone the round of the male members of her own community, she is ready to go to a neighbouring village and there sell her person to strangers. In every men's club-house (*bay*) there is kept at least one unmarried girl from another village, who acts as the companion and mistress of the men and is paid for her services. She is called an *armengol*. The period of her service is normally three months, after which her father fetches her home; but the period may be prolonged for another three months. The office is not regarded as infamous; on the contrary, it is reckoned to a woman's credit that she was an *armengol* in her youth. But a woman who should voluntarily choose to spend her whole life as an *armengol* in a men's club-house would be thought little of. During her term of office she has to keep the club-house clean and attend to the lamp. She is well treated by the men and is not forced to grant her favours to them. She chooses a companion or lover, whose mistress she nominally is, and who is responsible for the payment of her wages; but she is free to consort with other men on certain conditions. If she has tact, she acquires a great influence over the men of the club (*kaldebekel*). It is her duty to attract young men to the club-house and to keep them together; she accompanies the members of the club on all its expeditions, except when they go to war. She may not be struck, and any insult to her is regarded as an insult to the club. Her food is sent her from the headman's house. If the wife of a married member of the club is good-natured, she may allow the

The *armengols*, unmarried girls living as mistresses in the men's club-houses.

armengol to come to her house and take her meals there; but this does not happen very often. The *armengol* ranks below the married women of the village, but they may not insult or strike her. Some club-houses have several of these paid mistresses (*armengols*). A man may, and often does, offer to marry an *armengol* during her term of service, and if his offer is accepted, he pays a sum to the club for his wife.[1] More commonly, however, it would seem, the girls marry after their period of service is over and they have returned to their own village. They have then no difficulty in finding husbands. On the contrary, a girl who should refuse to go as an *armengol* to another village would be blamed by her parents and would be universally regarded in her own community as unfit to be a wife.[2]

Captured *armengols.*

Beside these voluntary *armengols*, there are, or used to be, others who had been captured in war and were compelled to spend their whole lives in the club-house of their captors. Sometimes, too, without going to war, the men of one village will capture and carry off a girl from another village; if she refuses to become an *armengol* in the village of her captors, she will be held to ransom. But often the girls are not only willing to go, but privately arrange with the members of a club in a neighbouring village to come and carry them off. A woman who quarrels with her family or husband may take refuge in the club-house of a neighbouring village, where she will be welcomed, but she may not enter a men's club-house in her own village.[3] The husband of a woman who has thus taken up her abode in the club-house of another village may recover her on paying a ransom for her to the club; if he cannot pay the ransom, any other man who possesses the necessary means may redeem her.[4] Many women take so kindly to life in a men's club-house that they desert their husbands to return to it.[5]

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 50-53, 91-93. On this subject, see further K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 65 *sq.*, 321 *sqq.* The latter writer calls the girls *armunguls*. The *armengols* clearly correspond to the *mespils* of Yap. See above, pp. 160 *sqq.*

[2] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 324.

[3] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 93 *sq.* As to the preconcerted captures of girls, compare K. Semper, *op. cit.* pp. 321 *sqq.*

[4] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 319.

[5] K. Semper, *op. cit.* p. 66.

Companies of *armengols*.

Sometimes a number of young women arrange among themselves to go out to a neighbouring village and serve for a time as *armengols* in one of the men's club-houses. The village to which they repair welcomes them, and their own parents are pleased. The girls are lodged in one or other of the men's club-houses for several months, receiving an abundant supply of food, to which every house in the village contributes; their relations also bring them provisions from time to time. The number of young women who thus go out together to serve as *armengols* is usually from seven to ten; formerly, when the islands were more thickly peopled, it might be as much as twenty. Such a joint expedition may be ordered by a chief, who desires to profit by the wages which the girls receive for their services. The native name for one of these expeditions, and for the company of girls who take part in it, is *blolobol*. Normally such expeditions take place only in time of peace, and they furnish one of the principal occasions of setting the native money in circulation.[1]

Separate clubs (*kaldebekels*) of men and women.

The clubs (*kaldebekels*) into which both sexes are divided play a great part in the social and public life of the people. The aims which the clubs set before themselves are to keep the population in constant readiness for the defence of the country, to execute the orders of the chiefs, and to carry out any tasks or undertakings which the community as a whole may have decided on. Hence the members of the club sleep together in their club-house. Should any member of the club be absent, from any cause, when any piece of work is to be done, he must pay a fine, which is distributed among the other members of the club, the largest share going to the headman.[2] The headman has to see to it that the club-house is supplied with oil; he has to make the disbursements due from the club, including the wages of the *armengols*; he is responsible for the doings of the members, and must pay any fines they may have incurred by breaches of law and custom.[3] The property of a club includes the club-house (*bay*) with all its contents, the war-

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 94-96.

[2] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 83 *sq.*

[3] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 82.

canoe with its tackle, and the trees near the club-house which have been planted by the club, especially the areca-palms and betel-plants; finally, the club may own some animals, such as pigs, goats, and dogs. For any injury done to the property of the club compensation is demanded; if it is not granted, the whole club will march to the house of the offender and enforce its demand, which in that case is never refused.[1]

Duties of members of a club.

Among the works in which every member of a club is bound to bear a hand, under penalty of a fine, are the building of club-houses and of the large war-canoes, the making of sails for these vessels, and the twisting of ropes out of the fibres of coco-nuts and hibiscus. In the old days, before the natives became acquainted with metals, the building of a club-house was a laborious undertaking which lasted many months. Further, the members of the club are bound to contribute to the expense of entertaining distinguished guests who have come from a distance, either to take part in a festival or to mourn the death of a chieftainess or other lady of high degree.[2] Finally, the members of a club may be called upon to discharge what we may call police duties, by proclaiming and enforcing the interdicts or taboos (*bluls*) which the chiefs have decided to lay on certain foods and luxuries. For example, if a great festival is approaching, and the chiefs fear that the supply of food may not suffice for the expected multitude, they may order a club to lay a taboo on coco-nuts and pigs. This the members of the club do by verbal proclamation and by blowing blasts on trumpet-shells; also they attach strips of coco-nut leaves to the coco-nut palms as a sign that the nuts may not be eaten. If the members catch any person breaking the taboo, they fine him, and have the right of appropriating the fine to the club. As the people are passionately fond of betel-chewing, and the betel-plant is not very common and requires careful cultivation, a taboo (*blul*) is oftener laid on betel than on anything else. At such times every betel-plant is under the interdict, and even chiefs chew a substitute, unless they obtain leave from the

The proclamation and enforcement of taboos.

[1] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 84 *sq.*; compare *id.* p. 64.

[2] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 120-122.

club to use the betel of their own plants. The penalties exacted during the continuance of a taboo are severer than in ordinary times. The culprits may be seized, dragged to the club-house, and there kept prisoners till they are ransomed by the head-chief. Sometimes the members of the club will surround the house of the offender, make holes in the walls, and shoot arrows at random through the holes, compelling the inmates to dodge about and screen themselves with boards or anything else that may serve to protect them from the shafts. In former days the penalty for a breach of taboo might even be death.[1]

Interior of a club-house.

The social life of the inmates of a club-house is confined to sleeping in it together at night and to occasional meetings for consultation during the day. Hence the furniture is very plain and simple. Members of the club take their meals in their private houses; hence the two hearths which are to be seen in every club-house serve only for keeping up fires by night. The whole floor during the day is bare and empty, for the sleeping-mats are rolled up and kept on little shelves high up on the side-walls of the house. The only domestic utensils are two earthenware lamps, one at each end of the house, which are lit every evening.[2]

Membership of a club.

The club and its duties absorb the greater part of a man's time and thoughts: he can spare comparatively little of either for his family: his public duties barely allow him leisure to catch a few fish for his wife and children. As for young unmarried men, they are only guests by day in the house of their parents, for they too must sleep in the club-house at night.[3] The membership of a club is not restricted to any one clan; on the contrary, every clan is equally represented in every club.[4] The average number of men in a club is from thirty-five to forty. All boys are obliged to become members of a club in their fifth or sixth year.[5]

Government by the chiefs of the clans.

The government of a community or petty state is in the hands of the chiefs (*rupaks*), who are the heads of their

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 85 *sq.* As to taboo (*blul*) in the Pelew Islands, compare K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 99, 212.

[2] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 91.

[3] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 62 *sq.*; compare *id.* p. 49.

[4] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 63.

[5] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 37.

respective clans (*blays*). The number of clans in a state appears to have been originally fixed at twenty, but in consequence of the decrease of the population the full tale is nowhere now made up. The clans are numbered in a regular order, and each clan takes rank according to its number on the roll. The clans at the head of the roll are called the Great Clans (*klou-blays*), and the chiefs of these Great Clans are the Great Chiefs (*klou-rupaks*). The number of the Great Clans, and consequently of the Great Chiefs, varies in different states; usually it is between four and six. The chief of the first clan is the nominal head of the state, and is called the Head of the Land (*ptolul a pelu*).[1] He it was, no doubt, whom visitors to the islands in former days called the King.[2]

Respect shown to chiefs.

The chiefs are not distinguished from commoners by any outward badge, but they are all known personally to the people, who pay them various degrees of respect according to their rank. A commoner ought not to accost a chief; but if he is obliged to do so, he takes the comb out of his hair, sits down on the ground, or at least crouches on his heels, and addresses the chief by a title equivalent to "Father." If he meets a chief, he stoops and goes out of the way to let him pass. Chiefs observe a similar etiquette among themselves. None of them will stand while the others are sitting; and if one of them has to pass another chief in the club-house, he stoops and requests leave of the other to pass him. The head chief, or king, has to observe the same forms of politeness to the other chiefs.[3] In every state there is an assembly-house for the chiefs built on a large paved area, generally with one or more guest-houses standing beside it for the reception of visitors from other states.[4]

Duties of chiefs.

It is the duty of the chiefs to see that the traditional customs are observed and breaches of them punished. The punishment generally consists in a fine, which is distributed among the chiefs. But their services as judges are seldom

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 63.

[2] So G. Keate (*Account of the Pelew Islands*, pp. 290 *sqq.*), and K. Semper (*Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 36, 114, etc.).

[3] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 78 *sq.*

[4] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 64.

required; for a knowledge of the traditional customs is so general and a respect for them so deeply engrained in the people, that when an offence has been committed in private affairs, the parties usually settle it between themselves without appealing to the authority of the chiefs. For example, if a thief has been detected stealing a pig, or betel from a plantation, the owner will apply to him for compensation, and the thief will pay it without demur. And the same procedure is followed in other offences, such as adultery or an insult offered to a woman. We are told that this readiness to confess a fault and make compensation is based, not so much on a sense of justice, as on a religious or superstitious fear that the injured party may avenge himself by invoking his gods or by hiring a sorcerer to harm the wrongdoer.[1] As a rule only crimes that appear to strike at the general security, such as murder and witchcraft, are punished by the Government, that is, by the chiefs. Witches or wizards, who are supposed to be possessed by demons and thereby to cause sickness and death, are often murdered, and though their murder is approved by public opinion, it is often punished by the native authorities.[2]

Transference of chief's badge to his successor.

When a chief dies, his title and badge of office are transferred to his successor. The transference takes place at the burial of the late chief, even before his body has been laid in the grave. The badge consists of a coco-nut leaf and a taro-plant. These the master of the ceremonies takes in his hand and applies to the head of the corpse, informing the dead man that, since he has departed this life, they propose to transfer his title to his successor. Then, after several feints, he hands the badge to the new chief, who is seated at the door of his house. The chief receives it, passes it round his body twice from the right hand to the left hand and back again, finally placing it under his right thigh. Afterwards the badge is hung up in the house. This ceremony confers the title of office on the new chief, but he may not mix with his colleagues nor enter their assembly-house until a large sweet cake, of a pointed triangular shape, has been carried to the piazza of

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 73.

[2] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 73 *sq.*

the village and there divided among all the assembled chiefs.[1]

Ceremonies at the installation of a high chief.

The ceremonies observed at the installation of a high chief are much more elaborate. During the mourning for the late chief, which lasts for thirty or forty days, his successor is shut up in a sort of small chapel beside the chief's house, and he may not issue from it until a friendly state has sent him a freshly-cut human head, which he pays for. After that he is free to enter the club-house, but still he may not go to the shore of the sea until further formalities have been observed. These comprise a very costly fishing expedition, which is conducted by the inhabitants of another state and lasts several weeks. At the end of it a net full of fish is brought to the piazza (*bay el pelu*) of the village, whither the people of the neighbouring communities have been summoned by the blast of shell-trumpets. As soon as the stranger fishermen have been publicly paid for their services, a relative of the new chief steps across the net and solemnly splits a coco-nut in two with an old-fashioned knife made of a tridacna shell, while at the same time he bans all the evils that might befall his kinsman. From the way in which the two halves of the nut lie on the ground he draws an omen as to whether the chief will live long or not. The pieces of the nut are then tied together and taken to the house of the chief next in rank, where they are kept in token that the ceremony has been duly performed. Thereupon the fish are divided among the people, half of them going to the strangers who helped to carry the net. This concludes the ceremonies regularly performed at the installation of the paramount chief, whom European observers commonly designate as the king.[2]

Custom of heir to a chief murdering his predecessor.

But in some of the noblest clans it is, or used to be, customary for the heir of a chief to murder his predecessor and, after a formal retribution, to reign in his stead with the general consent of the people. This happened when a chief

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 45, 75 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 76-78. Since the islands passed under European rule the custom of requiring a fresh-cut human head at the installation of a high chief has no doubt been discontinued. Kubary's account of the social institutions of the natives was written when the islands were still independent.

had made himself unpopular or was thought to have reigned too long. In such cases the heir had a formal right to put his predecessor to death. The practice of regicide in these islands was a national institution, regulated by exact rules, and every high chief must lay his account with it. Indeed, so well recognized was the custom that when the heir-apparent, who under the system of mother-kin must be a brother, a nephew, or a cousin on the mother's side, proved himself precocious and energetic, the people used to say, "The cousin is a grown man. The chief's *tobolbel* is nigh at hand."[1]

The plot and its execution.

Yet, once the resolution to kill the chief had been taken, the plot was kept so secret that it nearly always succeeded. The first care of the conspirators was to learn where the doomed man kept his money. For this purpose an old woman, who held high office in the clan, obligingly lent her assistance. Availing herself of her official position, she slept for several nights in the chief's house and made enquiries without exciting suspicion. When she had discovered the hoard, she passed the word to the conspirators; whereupon the heir either came in person and despatched his predecessor with his own hands, or employed a young cousin to do the murder for him. After that, he took possession of the official residence and applied to his victim's widow the form of persuasion technically known as *meleket*. This consisted in tying a noose round the lady's neck and drawing it tighter and tighter till she consented to give up her husband's money. After that, the murderer and his friends had nothing further to do but to wait quietly in the house and let events take their usual course.[2]

Pretence of avenging the murder of the chief.

Meantime the chiefs gathered in the council-house, and the loud droning notes of the triton-shell, which answered the purpose of a tocsin, summoned the whole population to arms. The warriors mustered, and surrounding the house where the conspirators were ensconced, they showered spears

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 43. Compare J. S. Kubary, "Die Verbrechen und das Strafverfahren auf den Pelau-Inseln," *Original-Mittheilungen aus der ethnologischen Abtheilung der königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, i. Heft 2/3 (Berlin, 1886), p. 87. I have described this custom elsewhere. See *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, [3], ii. 266 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 43 *sq.*

and stones at it, as if they would inflict condign punishment on the assassins. But this was a mere blind, a sham, a legal fiction, designed perhaps to throw dust in the eyes of the simple-minded ghost by impressing on him the erroneous conviction that his death was being avenged by his loyal subjects. In point of fact the warriors took good care to discharge their missiles at the roof or walls of the house, for if they threw them at the windows they would run a serious risk of hurting the murderer. When this formality had been performed to the satisfaction of all concerned, the regicide stepped out of the house and engaged in the genial task of paying the death duties to the various chiefs assembled. When he had observed this indispensable ceremony, the law was satisfied; all constitutional forms had been complied with; the assassin was now the legitimate successor of his victim, and reigned in his stead without a blot on his scutcheon or a twinge of his conscience.[1]

Advantages and disadvantages of the murder.

The great advantage of murdering a chief and stepping into his shoes was that it dispensed the murderer from the need of performing the tedious and costly ceremonies which the natural death of a chief entailed on his successor. On the other hand, it laboured under one very serious drawback: it was extremely expensive, the death duties for the assassination of a chief being so exorbitant that only the rich could afford to indulge in it. Hence it came about that in the Pelew Islands some forty years ago the old-fashioned custom of succession by slaughter was restricted to a few families of the bluest blood and the longest purses.[2]

Chief's power over the lands of the clan.

Every clan owns lands which have been in its possession from time immemorial. It is the duty of the chief of the clan to look after these lands and to guard them against encroachments on the part of other clans. He has also the power of selling portions of the estate, but only with the consent of his kinsmen, which, however, is generally a mere matter of form. The chief's house, which is solidly built, is also the property of the clan; the chief occupies it with his family during his life, and at his death it passes to his successor.[3]

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 44.

[2] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 44 *sq.*

[3] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 46 *sq.*

The commoners naturally compose the great bulk of the people. They have no titles, but only numbers, which they take from their mothers. On the death of the man in front of him on the social ladder, every commoner takes a step up the ladder, and in time, if he lives long enough, he may attain to the topmost rung and be himself a chief or headman (*obokul*). But that can hardly be until comparatively late in life. The general name for commoners is *Arameau*, which means "the Naked Ones," or *Arabuyks*, which means "the Boys."[1] We can now perhaps understand the statement of our best authority on the social life of these islanders, the Polish ethnographer J. Kubary, who tells us that there is no division of the people into ranks or classes, and no nobility in our sense of the word. The higher clans of a village, he admits, form a sort of aristocracy, but on the other hand, so far as political rights are concerned, they are on a level with the lowest clan of the village. The outstanding features of the social order among these islanders, he informs us, are age and federation; the conception of the chiefs as princes or kings has only a subjective significance, by which he apparently means that it corresponds to nothing in the mind of the native and merely expresses a European interpretation of the institution.[2]

The commoners.

As the petty states into which the Pelew Islands were parcelled out owed no allegiance to each other, it often happened that one community was at war with its neighbours. Of war they distinguished two degrees, a great war and a little war.[3] In a great war the armed force of the community was conveyed in canoes to the scene of action, where it landed and engaged the foe, hurling their spears at him and parrying or dodging those with which he returned the compliment. Both sides thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and the danger was insignificant. One man might be laid low, and his head reward the victors. But the introduction of firearms damped the ardour of the combatants and changed the whole aspect of native warfare. The last great war which was waged by natives alone took place about 1843. Armed with muskets of an antique pattern, the two sides blazed

Wars.

The great war.

[1] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 48, 63.
[2] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 72.
[3] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 124.

away at each other; the noise was deafening, the amount of powder expended prodigious; and as the upshot one warrior fell on the field of honour, whereupon all his side ran away, only to return in a humble frame of mind, make their submission to the conqueror, and pay the inevitable indemnity.[1]

The little war.

Unlike a great war, which was a general and public attack on a hostile community, a little war was merely an expedition conducted secretly for the purpose of obtaining a human head, which was deemed indispensable on various occasions. Among these occasions was the installation of a paramount chief or king. The head was usually procured and brought by the people of a friendly state, who came dancing with it and received payment for the ghastly trophy. Again, when a high chief fell sick, and the diviner declared that the sickness was caused by the chief's family god, a human head was procured as an expiatory offering. Further, when a certain great festival called *mulbekel* was celebrated with sacred dances (*ruk*), for which the dancers had to make long and elaborate preparations, it was deemed essential to get two human heads, of which one was for the hearth-stones on which the victuals were cooked, and the other was supposed to rid the young people of the fatigue which they had incurred by their exertions at the festival. Again, when one of the little spirit-houses or shrines was set up, two human heads were procured, one for the painting of the shrine, and the other for the carving of the roof. Once more, when a new club-house was built, the gable ends, which were covered with carving, could not be set up till a human head had been obtained.[2]

Head-hunting.

The taking of a head and the pursuit.

The state of things between communities which thus took heads from each other was neither active war nor settled peace. Both sides had constantly to be on the alert; at any moment a blast on the triton-shell might ring out to tell that somebody was missing, that the folk of such-and-such a village had taken him or her. It was always an unarmed individual, and often a woman, who thus fell a victim to the prowling head-hunters of a neighbouring village. In

[1] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 137 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 124 *sq.* As to the *mulbekel* festival and the *ruk* dances, see J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 104-113; K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 305 *sq.*, 311 *sq.*, 328 *sq.*, 330 *sq.*, 335 *sq.*

the village which had suffered the loss there was naturally excitement and tumult. The booming notes of the shell-trumpets continued to drone out their alarm and warning to the whole neighbourhood, and from the direction of the sound everybody knew whence the enemy had come, and who he was. A party of armed men soon hastened hot-foot in pursuit of the foe; but he had generally a good start, and the avengers seldom came up with him. If they returned unsuccessful, the excitement in the village soon subsided. The people consoled themselves by the thought that the lost head was only a loan which one day would be repaid to them, perhaps with interest. Only the family of the murdered man or woman were left to mourn the death and to bury the mangled remains.[1]

Expedition to avenge a murder.

When the younger men of a club decided that it was time to avenge their wrongs on the village of the aggressors, they had recourse to divination, and, if the answer was favourable, they applied to the paramount chief for leave to set out on their mission of blood. If he granted it, the next step was to consult a priest in order to obtain the blessing of God on their undertaking, and this consultation had naturally to be paid for. Having received his fee, the priest became inspired by the deity and prophesied success or failure for the expedition. If the verdict was favourable, the party of avengers prepared to set out. But first they committed themselves to the gracious keeping of the war-god Horgim, whose awful name might not be pronounced except at the moment of decapitating an enemy; at all other times he was known by the milder name of Iraria. The night before they started, they hung up a spear and prayed to the grim deity, and they listened for omens; if a certain sort of gecko was heard to squeak, or a certain kind of small insect to buzz or chirp, it was a sign that the blessing of God was on them, and they went forward confidently. If a man were to cut off a head without thus asking God's blessing on the deed, the blood of the slaughtered foe would spurtle all over him, and he would fall sick or die.[2]

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, p. 126.
[2] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 127-129.

The attack and the return.

When all was ready, the men, assured of the favour of heaven and armed to the teeth, set out as quietly as possible by night. On reaching the neighbourhood of the hostile village they smeared themselves with turmeric, took a last quid of betel in their mouths, and stole noiselessly to the nearest house, if they had failed to surprise anybody in the open. Having whisked off the head of one of the sleepers, they beat a retreat with it as rapidly as possible. For by this time the alarm was generally given in the village: the trumpets were pealing, the inmates were arming, and if the head-hunters did not run for it, they stood a very good chance of losing a head as well as gaining one. When that happened, the captain of the gang, on regaining his village, had to pay a heavy fine for the miscarriage. Still, in that case both sides had scored a triumph, for both sides could display a bleeding head as the trophy of their valour, and both danced the dance of victory.[1]

Reception of the head-hunters.

In consequence of the small size of the islands the warriors were never absent long; a single night usually sufficed to allow them to reach the most distant enemy, and to return home with the head and celebrate their triumph in the morning. In their absence, short as it was, the women at home abstained from working in the taro fields and prepared a strong liquor from young coco-nuts, with which to refresh the returning warriors. Then they went down to the beach or into the interior of the island, according to the direction which the expedition had taken, there to await the conquering heroes. Soon the party was heard and seen approaching with loud huzzas, dancing the war-dance. Thus they proceeded to the piazza of the village (*bay el pelu*), where there was always a stone, on which the captured head was deposited for all to admire. The chiefs surveyed the bleeding trophy; after which it was returned to the basket and hung up on a tree for the night. Then the members of the club which had planned and executed this glorious feat of arms marched to their club-house, dancing the war-dance the while. If they were young men who had been out on the war-path for the first time, they were now regarded as unclean (*meay*) or tabooed; they were shut up in the club-house for three days,

Seclusion and taboos observed by head-hunters after their return.

[1] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* pp. 128, 129.

during which they might not quit the house, nor bathe, nor touch a woman; they might not eat fish, nor indeed anything but coco-nuts and syrup; and they had to rub themselves with enchanted leaves of a certain plant and to chew enchanted betel. But if the head-hunters were old hands, who had often been out before and had cut off many heads, only those of them who had actually touched the dead body were subjected to this rigorous taboo, the intention of which was no doubt to guard them against the dangerous ghost of the slain, who would very naturally owe a grudge to anybody that had borne a hand in unhousing him from his body.[1]

War-dance and triumphal march of head-hunters.

After such a victory all the clubs of the village joined in dancing the war-dance, and accompanied by some of the chiefs, and often by the paramount chief or king himself, they marched in triumph through the neighbouring villages with which they were on friendly terms. Everywhere they were received as honoured guests and paid for the murder.

Disposal of the captured head.

In the last village the now useless head, still hidden in its basket, was thrown away, or rather it was usually hung up in a tree, till the basket rotted and the skull fell to the ground. Often the head was placed in the hollow of a large tree, where many similar tokens of victory had been deposited before. A tree which thus served as a Golgotha was called an *aylengel*. In the district of Molegoyok, the place of skulls is a pretty grove of trees, which passes for the home of the god Kolegoyok, who is supposed to devour the severed heads. He is represented by a small stone, which bears some resemblance to a human face, and is concealed in the middle of the grove. If the slain man belonged to a great family, his relations would offer to pay the victors for leave to bury his head. The request was usually granted, and the victors then danced their war-dance without the accompaniment of the gory relic of mortality.[2]

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 129 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 130 *sq.*

§ 3. *Religion: The Soul and its Fate after Death: Worship of the Dead*

Two elements of Pelew religion.

The religion of the Pelew Islanders, like that of most primitive peoples, is composed of two elements, the worship of nature and the worship of the dead, in particular, the worship of ancestral spirits.[1]

The human soul.

To take the latter element first, the natives have definite and developed ideas concerning the human soul and the life after death. For the soul as the vital principle, which animates the body during life, they have a word *adhalbengel*; for the soul as the seat of mental operations and emotions they have another word, *arngul*. The difference between the two seems to correspond roughly to the difference between the Latin *anima* and *animus*, the one being the principle of life, the other the principle of thought and emotion. The second name for the soul (*arngul*) is also applied to the larynx, because strong emotion is commonly attended by a feeling of constriction in the throat. But this does not imply that the soul (*arngul*) is seated in the throat; on the contrary, its seat is believed to be in the breast.[2]

Death ascribed to the agency of the gods or to magic.

When a person in the prime of life dies suddenly or as the result of illness, his death is ascribed either to the wrath of the gods (*kalids*) or to the evil magic of an enemy. A god is believed to avenge immediately any wrong done to himself, to his priest, or to his property. But he can also be induced by his priest to injure a perfectly innocent person, if only the appropriate form of procedure be followed. For this purpose a man will procure a lock of his enemy's hair and take it to the priest, along with a piece of money for the god. The priest thereupon prays to the god and hides the hair in the shrine of the deity. After that, the person whose hair has thus been treated is certain to die, sooner or later. Some people, of a malignant disposition and an economical turn of mind, think to save their money by putting an enemy's hair with their own

Death wrought by the gods.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," in A. Bastian's *Allerlei aus Volks- und Menschenkunde* (Berlin, 1888), i. 2.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 2 *sq.*

hands into the shrine of the god, without employing the services of a priest and paying the usual fee; but naturally this has not the same effect. It is absurd to suppose that the deity would act in the matter if he gets nothing at all for his trouble.[1] The shrines of the gods are miniature huts, painted in a variety of colours and raised on piles. They are often to be seen beside the club-houses or the houses of rich people. Offerings used to be placed in them for the gods or the spirits of the dead, who came by night and consumed the food thus presented to them by the faithful. At the present time, with the decay of the native religion, these little huts have lost their sacred character and now serve the purely secular purpose of cupboards or closets for the keeping of domestic utensils.[2]

Death wrought by magic.

But without having recourse to the intervention of the gods a man can work the destruction of his enemy by magic pure and simple. The modes of compassing this nefarious object are various. The magician may charm an areca nut and offer it to his unsuspecting victim, or put it in his basket. He may take a handful of areca blossoms and throw them on the roof of a house; after which the inmates of the house, if the charm works properly, are bound to die. He may enchant some small shells and drop them clandestinely about the house. Or he may pronounce his incantations over a variety of things, such as a coco-nut bowl, a potsherd, or a piece of coral, and bury them under his victim's house. If after that his enemy persists in not falling sick, the sorcerer will steal under the house and reinforce the charm by pouring sea-water on the spot. Of course, these enchantments are secrets known only to certain individuals, who must be paid to put them in operation.[3]

Counteracting evil magic.

Accordingly, if somebody is sick and a suspicious-looking object is found in or under the house, the anxious relatives

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* p. 5.

[2] F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, pp. 8 *sq.*; P. Raymund, "Die Faden- und Abnehmespiele auf Palau," *Anthropos*, vi. (1911), p. 44, with the illustration on p. 45. As to these shrines or houses of the gods, compare K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 318; and for a fuller account of them, see J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels*, pp. 251 *sq.*

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* pp. 5 *sq.*

will call in an expert to inform them whether the article in question is an instrument of magic or not. If the sage gives it as his opinion that the thing is really magical, another expert is sent for to counteract the charm. To do this he takes the object, whatever it may be, to a brook, washes it thoroughly, pronounces a spell over it, and then leaves it in the water to be washed away to the sea. If that does not suffice to heal the patient, the man of skill comes again and scours the house with the leaves of a certain tree or plant (*Cordylina*) dipped in water, which ought, if anything can, to effect a perfect cure.[1]

Departure of the soul to Ngadhalok.

After death the soul quits the body and becomes a spirit (*adhalep*). In that form it departs to the invisible land of Ngadhalok, which is situated at the extreme south-eastern point of the island of Pililu. Life in that land is a continuation of the earthly life in all particulars, without the least reference to the good or bad behaviour of the man on earth. The souls of dead women are believed to sail to the other world in a canoe; hence at burial a certain sum is paid to defray the cost of the voyage; the ghost could not reasonably be expected to work her passage. The money, however, is not deposited in the grave, but is kept by the head of the family. If the deceased was a married woman, it is her husband who pays for her passage to the other world; if she was unmarried, the expense is borne by one of the younger relatives.[2] The ghost lingers beside his body till the burial, and then hurries away by night to Ngadhalok. If he goes by the island of Malakal, he stops by the way to bathe in the spring there. In Ngadhalok there is a great deal of dancing and singing, and the ghosts of men who fell in battle are bantered; they are compared to speared fish.[3]

Necromancy.

The world of spirits, like its inhabitants, resembles in all respects this earth of ours, except that it is invisible to mortal eyes. However, in the island of Pililu there is, or used to be, a man who has inherited the gift of seeing the spirits, and his services are often employed by persons who

[1] J. Kubary, *op. cit.* p. 6.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* pp. 7 *sq.*; *id.* "Die Todten-bestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *Original-Mittheilungen aus der ethnologischen Abtheilung der königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, i. (1885) p. 10.

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* p. 8.

desire to look upon the face of some friend or relative deceased. For example, once upon a time not so very many years ago, a man who had lost a dearly loved wife went to Pililu and implored the seer to find and summon up for him her departed spirit. The sage consented, and the interview between the husband and his dead wife took place. But in spite of all his entreaties and conjurations her ghost refused to return with him to the land of the living. So at the bidding of the seer he caught her up and set out for home with his dear burden. But she turned into a bird and kept changing her shape in order to give him the slip. Determined not to let her go, he tied the bird firmly to him by the leg, and proceeded on his journey. But when he woke next morning, he found only the bird's leg, with the string tied round it. His wife was gone for ever.[1]

Return of the ghosts from Ngadhalok.

But though the spirits have their permanent abode in Ngadhalok and evince the greatest reluctance to return to earth, the natives stand in great fear of them. Indeed, the intercourse of the dead with the living is frequent, and many of the customs observed at burial have reference to it. For example, when a woman dies in childbed, her ghost comes and cries, "Give me the child!" So to quiet her perturbed spirit and appease her maternal longing, they put the stump of a young banana tree with her in the grave, laying it between her right arm and her breast, that she may take it for the child and be content; and at her left side they place a basket full of everything that the soul of the dead woman can need on the journey to her eternal home. So she departs in peace.[2]

Ghost of woman who died in childbed.

Ghost of man who was beheaded dangerous to his kinsfolk.

Again, when a man has been beheaded by an enemy, his ghost is angry with his relations, to whose negligence he is apt to attribute the deplorable accident of his death. Hence, to evade the wrath of the ghost, his kinsfolk are regarded as in a state of ceremonial pollution (*meay*) or taboo, and have to undergo a sort of purification. They are shut up in the house, they may not touch raw flesh, and

[1] J. Kubary, *l.c.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* p. 9. The significance of the bamboo stump in this ceremony is implied but not explicitly stated by the writer. But parallel customs in other lands leave no doubt as to the real meaning of the rite. See *The Golden Bough*, Part V., *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, ii. 97 *sq.*

they chew betel which has been enchanted by the wizard who purifies them. Then the ghost departs to the enemy's country and pursues the murderers who took his head.[1]

Treatment of the corpse.

When a sick man has breathed his last, his eyes and lips are closed by his sister, and all the women present begin their laments. Then the body is washed in warm water. If possible, this is done by the sister and wife of the deceased; and in general it is they who are charged with the duty of handling the corpse and preparing it for burial. The natural openings of the body are stopped to prevent the escape of the fluids; in some way, which is not defined, this is apparently supposed to benefit the soul of the dead man.[2] While the corpse is exposed to view, the female relations keep up a public lamentation, in which they are supported and relieved by relatives and friends who have flocked from all sides to the house of mourning. The words of the lament are appropriate enough. The mourners ask why the deceased has abandoned them, and they bewail their own forlorn and sorrowful plight. The time during which the body is thus exposed depends on the number of ceremonies to be observed, and that in turn varies with the social position of the deceased. The corpse remains at least one night in the house, the mourners watching and weeping beside it through all the hours of darkness.[3] The house in which a death has taken place is thereby polluted (*taor*), and no cooking may be done in it. Accordingly, when a dying person is near his end, a little shed is built at the side of the house; to it the fire and any superfluous articles of furniture are transferred, and in it the children are lodged. The women who are gathered about the corpse have their food brought to them by kinsfolk; no cooking is done in the shed beyond the first rough dressing of taro.[4]

House polluted by death.

Burial.

When all is ready, the corpse is wrapped in mats and carried forth on a bier to burial. If the deceased was a

[1] J. Kubary, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 126 *sq.*

[2] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *Original-Mittheilungen aus der ethnologischen Abtheilung der königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, i. (1885) p. 4; *id.*, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 9.

[3] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *op. cit.* i. 5 *sq.*

[4] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *op. cit.* i. 7.

chief, the ceremony of divesting him of his title and transferring it to his successor, which has already been described,[1] is performed at the door of the house. The grave is dug a few paces from the house; it is shallow, barely two feet deep.[2] When the burial is over, and the earth has been filled in, a small hut is erected on the grave, at least if the weather is rainy, and in it one of the children sleeps, and an oil lamp burns for several nights. Food is also brought to the grave, where it is consumed by the watcher, who, however, buries a little of it in the grave and pours out some of the drink on the ground, no doubt to appease the hunger and slake the thirst of the ghost. If the deceased was a great chief, a larger and more solid hut is built on the grave, whatever the weather may be, and in it the female relatives pass the first days of mourning.[3]

Hut on grave.

When the grave has been filled in, the period of formal mourning (*moneyu*) begins. During its continuance the house is regarded as polluted (*taor*), and the women who handled the corpse are taboo (*meay*). They remain shut up in the house, which they may not quit except for the most necessary purposes; they may not wash themselves nor eat fish; their diet is restricted to certain sweet dishes which the other houses of the village are bound to furnish. The chiefs of the village pass the time of mourning in the council-house, where they must sleep, and they may not quit it except to bathe. The greatest stillness is observed in the village during the days of mourning; all noisy occupations are forbidden, and the children, who love to romp in the streets, are sent away to play on the beach.[4]

Mourning.

Seclusion of mourners.

On the third day of mourning, very early in the morning, before daybreak, a great heap of uncooked taro is piled up in front of the door of the house as food for the ghost, and a friend of the deceased is sent for to fetch it away. If the

Food for the ghost.

[1] Above, p. 123.

[2] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *op. cit.* i. 8.

[3] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *op. cit.* i. 9; *id.* "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 9.

[4] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *op. cit.* i. 9; *id.* "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 9 *sq.* From the latter passage we learn that the house in which the women are secluded is their own house, which is not necessarily the house in which the death took place.

friend is a woman, she comes dressed in a fine skirt and is given a basket. Accompanied by a woman of her household, she then goes into the wood and picks many flowers and grasses and scented leaves, including the red leaves of a particular sort of plant. These red leaves she washes in a spring and anoints with oil, and then brings the leaves and flowers to the house of mourning, where they are fashioned into a pyramidal nosegay more than a foot high.

The ghost is questioned and reveals the cause of his death.

At evening, when supper is over and all is quiet in the house, a woman, whose feet are covered with a mat, takes the nosegay in both hands; but the nosegay is protected by a plaited sheath, so that her hands do not touch the flowers and leaves. Then the woman who acts as chief mourner invokes the ghost and begs him to alight on the nosegay and thereby to reveal the true cause of his death. Thereupon she names all the possible causes of death, until the nosegay begins to quiver. When the true cause of death is mentioned, the nosegay shakes violently in all directions and falls to the ground. But if the ghost does not like the person who holds the nosegay, he gives no sign, and the bunch of flowers and leaves is transferred to another woman, and so on, till the shaking of the nosegay conveys the ghost's answer, which is greeted by all the women with a loud cry. The relatives are then content; they consume the offerings, and afterwards betake themselves to rest; the chief mourner among the women sleeps with the nosegay.[1]

The end of mourning.

Next day, which is the fourth day of formal mourning (*moneyu*), very early in the morning, the nosegay is carried to the grave and there attached to a bamboo, which is set up at the head end of the grave. Then the woman who carried the nosegay utters a loud shriek. The chiefs assembled in the council-house hear it, and know that their time of mourning is over. One of the women, who possesses the gift of seeing spirits, observes the nosegay and perceives the ghost drawing near to it. Yet he usually keeps at some distance, for the nosegay is carried off by the hostile deity who killed the sick man. Immediately afterwards, on the

[1] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *op. cit.* i. 9 *sq.*

same morning, the grave is covered with stones, and the time of mourning for the women who had been polluted by contact with the dead comes to an end. But the nearest relations of the dead continue to mourn, it may be for a hundred days.[1]

The ghosts of relations who died certain deaths (in battle, in childbed, by suicide) are feared.

As a rule, the people fear only the ghosts of strangers. In regard to the ghosts of their own kinsfolk they feel tolerably safe in virtue of the good understanding which prevails between the family and the spirits of its dead members, who are known collectively as *bladhek*. But the souls of relations who fell in battle, or whose heads were cut off by the enemy, also the spirits of suicides and of women who died in childbed or were killed by their jealous husbands, belong to a different class; they are the only spirits of kinsfolk who can give trouble to their family. Hence they are the only kinsfolk whose bodies are buried outside the village and without any marks of honour. At their burial an exorcizer is called in, who enchants some areca nuts and gives them to the family to chew so long as the ghost is lingering near the house; the members of the family are also taboo (*meay*) for several days. Otherwise it is only the ghosts of strangers passing through the country on their way to their long home, who disturb the inmates of houses by rapping on the walls and rattling doors and windows.[2]

Seers who communicate with the dead.

The spirits of the dead are dumb to ordinary mortals, or at all events can only make their presence heard by low whistling. But the survivors often feel a need of communicating with the soul of somebody deceased; for example, if he departed this life without revealing where he kept his hoard of money. Now there are certain seers who, being possessed by the gods, can converse with any ghost in the

[1] J. S. Kubary, "Die Todtenbestattung auf den Pelau-Inseln," *op. cit.* i. 10.

[2] J. S. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 10. Elsewhere, speaking of suicides in particular, Kubary tells us that "the spirits of those who died an unnatural death are feared, and their bodies are denied an honourable burial in the family graves. Like the bodies of men who have fallen in war, they are buried where they died." See J. S. Kubary, "Die Verbrechen und das Strafverfahren auf den Pelau-Inseln," *Original-Mittheilungen aus der ethnologischen Abtheilung der königlichen Museen zu Berlin*, i. Heft 2/3 (Berlin, 1886), p. 78.

house of his kinsfolk. When such a communication is to be held with the world beyond the grave, a taro-root, baked in the fire, is laid in a certain part of the house, and the ghost descends and converses with the seer. It is true that the audience do not hear the voice of the ghost, but they do hear distinctly the loud answers of the seer, from which it is quite easy for them to infer the general drift of the observations offered by the invisible ghost to the visible wizard.[1]

Worship of ancestral spirits.

The ghosts of dead kinsfolk are the natural guardian spirits of the family, and although, as ancestral spirits (*bladhek*), they are distinct from the gods (*kalids*), they are nevertheless accorded a high degree of veneration and a real worship, with the head of the family for their priest. The place in the house which these spirits usually frequent is a sort of cupboard or storeroom, where the inmates keep part of their moveable property, and it is there that the offerings for the spirits are deposited. If there is no such cupboard in the house, the offerings are placed on one of the cross-beams or on a chest in a corner. These places serve as altars and are devoted to the worship of the domestic or family gods as well as to that of the ancestral spirits, for sacrifices and prayers are always addressed both to the gods (*kalids*) and to the ancestral spirits (*bladhek*).[2]

Invocation of ancestral spirits, and offerings to them.

The invocation of the ancestral spirits takes place on special occasions; for example, in cases of illness when one of the many forms of divination has disclosed the house-spirits as the real cause of the disorder. And as divination can reveal the cause of the evil, so it can also announce the remedy. The usual offering is a young coco-nut, shredded up and seasoned with some pieces of money. This savoury meat is first offered to the spirit on a small plate of tortoise shell, after which it is eaten by the master of the house, who thereby symbolizes the gracious acceptance of the offering by the spirit. And a portion of every offering made to the gods (*kalids*) is presented also to the ancestral spirits (*bladhek*).[3]

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 11.
[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 10 *sq.*
[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 12.

Apart from cases of sickness, the aid of the ancestral spirits is invoked on all important occasions; for example, before an expedition by sea, or by a leader before decisive operations on land. In this last case the chief withdraws from intercourse with the outer world and remains shut up in his house with the oldest women of the clan. It is assumed that the spirits of his forefathers, who were all of them ruling chiefs, now abide with him and guide him in the resolutions which he takes.[1]

Aid of ancestral spirits sought on all important occasions.

From all this it is clear that the ancestral spirits, though quite distinct from the gods, play a great part in the life of the Pelew Islanders and form one-half of the family religion of the people. The other half of the religion comprises the worship of the gods (*kalids*), though in it also the head of the family is the priest.[2]

Importance of the worship of ancestral spirits.

§ 4. *Religion: The Worship of Gods and Spirits*

The main feature of this religion, in its simplest form, is the veneration which every man entertains for one or more deities which belong to him and have as their images or representatives some animal, whose life must, as far as possible, be spared, and whose flesh may in no case be eaten. On this subject J. S. Kubary, our principal authority on the religion and society of the Pelew Islands, makes the following observations: "Almost all our informants on the religions of the South Sea have recorded traces of this religion, and in truth it forms so peculiar and important a part of the religions of the whole of the South Sea peoples that it everywhere persisted and survived the downfall of the national religions which were afterwards partly founded upon it. For example, as late as 1870 I found in Christianized Samoa the custom of regarding an animal or a fish as the *o le ata aitu*, 'the shadow or image of a god.' With regard to Micronesia I know from personal observation that all the peoples still practise this worship in a very primitive form. Thus in Ponape such a fish is simply called *ani*, which is also the name for the deity and every spirit. In the

Gods represented by sacred animals.

Prevalence of animal gods in the Pacific.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 12.
[2] J. Kubary, *l.c.*

Marshall Islands it is called *anij*. In all the Central Caroline Islands as far as Uleaj, including the Ruk Islands, the name is *anû*, and the animal is conceived as the shadow or soul of the *anû* (*nginin anû*)." In the Pelew Islands such an animal is called the *adalsahel* of the god or of the man who owns the god; the name is derived from a word *dalasak*, which signifies "image" or "carved work," from *melasak*, "to hew out with an axe."[1]

Kubary on animal gods.

The origin of this system of gods conceived or represented in animal forms, Kubary observes, can only be conjectured; for the peoples who accept the system, or did so till lately, have advanced far beyond the very primitive modes of thought in which such a pantheon must have originated. But from traces which he had met with in his investigations Kubary was inclined to assume that at first these sacred animals stood in a very close relationship with the spirits of the human dead, and that, at a time when men had not yet conceived of the home of the departed as situated in some far-away region, they may have imagined the souls of the dead to be lodged in the sacred animals as their vehicles and representatives.[2]

The sacred animals connected with totemism.

To us nowadays it seems tolerably certain that the system of sacred animals, of which Kubary found traces among all the natives of Micronesia and Polynesia, is either totemism or developed out of it. But as the origin of totemism itself is still very obscure and debateable, this does not help us much to solve the problem raised by the eminent Polish ethnographer.

The gods of the clans.

The worship of the gods (*kalids*) is a religion of the clans; every clan has its own god; accordingly there are as many gods as clans, and as each clan tends to worship its god in a peculiar way of its own, we may almost say that there are as many worships as deities. Hence, with the evolution of a number of clans into a village community (*pelu*), there went hand in hand a parallel evolution of deities, the god of the chief clan becoming the chief god of the united community. And as these village communities gradually coalesced in a higher federal union, the gods of

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 12 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 14.

the great villages (*klou pelu*) became the great gods (*klou kalids*) of the federal state.[1]

The local gods of the village communities.

The deities thus evolved are the local or political gods of the village communities; their worship makes up what we may call the public religion of the people. They preside over the affairs of a village, and their help is invoked in sickness, when the clan gods and ancestral spirits refuse their aid.[2] The deities of the clans are all goddesses, which is explained by the social importance of women in the clans. The mother transmits her clan and her deity to her children, but the father does not. The natives say that the gods of the men are quiet and peaceable, but that the gods of the women play mischievous pranks and plague the clansfolk with sickness.

Clan gods developed into local or village gods.

On the other hand, if we compare the house or clan gods with the local or village gods, we see that many of the clan gods have developed into local or village gods; and a study of the traditions as to the mode in which this development took place appears to show that the modern Pelew religion has been evolved, under political influence, out of the worship of the old clan gods. A few examples, borrowed from tradition, may illustrate this evolution.[3]

Local gods who were chiefs in their life.

Thus the local god Augel, who is now worshipped in several places, is traditionally said to have been a chief of the Augel people, who bore in life the name of Kobokobakel.[4] Again, one of the most powerful gods in the Pelew Islands is Madhahey pelau of Eyrray. He is said to have been an ambitious and masterful man, who made himself chief by force of arms. Apparently he is a comparatively modern deity, for the house in which he lived is still pointed out, with the war-like trophies which he won by his victories.[5] Again, Pageu Rbodhol, the god of the district of Rbodhol in the island of Koryor, is said to have been a very valiant man, who freed his native land from a monster which infested it. The monster was invulnerable, being clad in a complete suit of tortoise-shell mail. But the champion armed himself with a spear thicker than a man's thigh, and

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 15-17.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 20.

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 22.

[4] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 22 *sq.*

[5] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 23 *sq.*

challenged the monster to a contest in singing. The simple-minded monster accepted the challenge, and had just opened his lips to give a specimen of his vocal talent, when his adversary jabbed his spear into the minstrel's mouth. That was the end of the monster. But as for the man, or rather the god, his spear is shown to this day as a convincing proof of the truth of the tradition.[1]

Again, the god Kwodol is said to have been a man whose mother was a native of Ngorsul. When enemies attacked Ngorsul, the valiant Kwodol defended it and beat them off. So he was raised to the godhead.[2]

Worship of gods in latest form a worship of heroes.

Thus the worship of the gods, in its latest development, is a worship of heroes, and its final form is due to the political evolution of the people. But this modern religion has not entirely ousted the ancient one from which it sprang; for side by side with these male gods we find everywhere a goddess, who is generally the deity of a clan. For example, the chief gods of Molegoyok are two, a goddess named Amlahel, which is equivalent to "Mother," and a god called Kodalmelek. The goddess is the patroness of one clan, and the god is the patron of another; but the chief of the clan which has the goddess for its patron ranks third on the roll of dignity, while the chief of the clan which has the god for its patron ranks only fifth on the roll.[3]

Goddesses of clans.

Ancient clan goddesses, modern local gods.

The goddesses of particular districts are generally related to the gods, and as these goddesses are mostly old deities of clans, we seem to have in this relationship an attempt to blend the ancient religion of clan goddesses with the modern religion of local gods, the spiritual evolution of the deities following the lines of the political evolution which united a number of clans in a single state.[4]

Pelew polytheism a consequence of the number of petty states.

The great number of deities in the Pelew pantheon thus springs directly from the great number of little independent communities into which society was originally divided; and since, on account of the smallness of the islands, these communities were often related to each other, and female influence was predominant in them all, we can readily under-

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 24.

[2] J. Kubary, *l.c.*

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 25 *sq.*

[4] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 26 *sq.*

stand how it has come about that many districts have goddesses of the same name, though the modern inhabitants of the districts affirm that, in spite of the identity of the names, the goddesses are quite distinct from each other.[1]

The names of the goddesses are seldom proper names; for the most part they are common words with a general significance. For example, the name Amlahel, which often meets us as the name of a goddess, is derived from *romagel*, which means "to bear," "to bring forth"; so that Amlahel means "She who brings forth," "the Mother." Again, Eyluay, another name of a goddess, means "Old Woman"; and Dhul, Ardhul, Ardhur, other names of goddesses, signify no more than "Woman." Some of the names, such as Dorom kriik, meaning "Rapid ebb-tide," point to the goddesses being personifications of natural phenomena; such deities, as we shall see presently, play an important part in the life of the islanders and have a well-developed worship of their own.[2]

The names of the goddesses.

The names of the male gods generally point to their human and comparatively recent origin. Of special importance is the name Augel, which also occurs in the forms Arugel and Ngaruhel, signifying "The Foremost." It embraces a whole series of deities, which are all referable to a particular epoch. The modern population of the islands ascribe the present constitution of society to these Augels. Nobody knows whence they came, but they advanced over the islands from the north and ended their revolutionary activity in the island of Angyaur. All these Augels, now raised to the rank of deities, have for their image or symbol a sailing canoe, which points plainly to their foreign origin. The names of many of them are forgotten; but the names of seven of them, who were associated together, are particularly remembered, though even in regard to them there is no general agreement about their names. However, one of them, by name Augel Sum, of the island of Eyrray, is unanimously designated by tradition as the quickest witted of the seven. For once on a time when the seven champions sailed away to the south for a wager, to see who should be

The names of the gods.

The Augels, the founders of the present constitution of society.

How Auge Sum outwitted the other six Augels.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 27 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 28.

the first to break a bough of a casuarina tree, he outwitted the other six by letting the white ants hollow out his canoe, which made it much lighter; and whereas the other six had only one sheet apiece to the sails of their canoes, he had seven. So when they were come to a certain passage between two islands, a malicious deity blew such a gale that it tore away the sheets of the six champions, and they could sail no farther. But of Augel Sum's seven sheets, though six snapped in the gale, one held taught; so he made the island of Pililu with his last remaining sheet, broke the bough of the casuarina tree, and set sail for home. On his return voyage he took a short cut by steering straight on a cliff and cleaving his way right through the middle of it. The cleft in the rocks exists to this day as a witness of the feat; the natives still make use of it in very stormy weather. Many such myths or legends are represented in the painted carvings which adorn the gable ends of the club-houses.[1]

Priests inspired by the gods.

Whatever be the origin of the modern Pelew deities (*kalids*), they have a uniform worship, in so far as they are gods of districts and communicate with men through a powerful and highly developed priesthood. Every one of them can take possession of whomsoever he will and can speak through him. Every such revelation and every such inspired medium is called an *odho*. But the revelation and the inspiration may be only temporary, for the deity looks about for a long time before he settles on a person who shall be his regular priest or prophet; when he has finally made his choice, the vehicle of his inspiration is called no longer an *odho*, but a *korong*. In theory the god is perfectly free in his choice; hence the priesthood is not hereditary. After the death of a priest, the deity is for some time without a representative, until he suddenly reveals himself by a temporary inspiration (*odho*) of somebody. The man so

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 29 *sq.* The name of the hero is variously given by the writer as Auger dusum (p. 29) and Augel Sum (p. 30). I have adopted the shorter form. As to the painted carvings on the end walls of the club-houses, under the projecting eaves, see J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipels*, pp. 242 *sqq.*; K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 334 note; F. Hernsheim, *Südsee-Erinnerungen*, p. 12, with plate 5. According to Semper the triangular wall under the eaves is divided into seven compartments, each with its special name and special myth carved on it.

favoured is at pains to appear odd and eccentric. He gapes, runs about, and plays silly tricks. At first people laugh at him; but in time, if the symptoms continue, they begin to think that there is more in it than meets the eye. As such a candidate for the priesthood never fails to mimic the characteristic symptoms of some particular deity, observers are seldom in doubt as to the god who has revealed himself in the new medium. The heads of clans accordingly consult together, and after mature consideration they invite the probationer to take his proper place in the state. Usually that place is a distinguished one, and allows the chosen vessel to exert a powerful influence on the whole community. In some states the government is a theocracy, the god (*kalid*) being recognized as the political head of the country. Hence in these states the newly nominated priest, who represents the god, assumes the rank of a priestly king, rules over all the other chiefs, and governs the country, so long as the god continues incarnate in him. However, the position of any one of these inspired mediums is precarious; for the god who has taken possession of him may at any time forsake him and settle on another. This apparent impartiality of the deity does much to confirm the popular faith in the genuineness of the inspiration; yet that faith helps to keep the people in spiritual bondage; indeed, before the islands fell under the sway of Europe, the blind credulity of the natives threatened before long to abolish every other form of government and to establish an absolute theocracy. For more and more the people were disposed to resign their fortunes submissively into the hands of the gods, whose priests accordingly grasped ever more firmly the reins of power in the conduct of temporal as well as of spiritual affairs.[1]

High position of the priests.

Priestly kings.

Tendency to a theocracy.

At the installation of a priest (*korong*) an offering of betel and areca nuts is presented to him for the deity who is supposed to dwell in him. His duty is to be at the service of any one who desires to address through him a prayer to a deity and to receive through him the divine answer to his request. The mode in which the priest discharges his office varies with the individual. Generally the

Inspiration of the priests by the gods.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 30-32.

priest begins by taking his fee, which in trifling cases will be paid in betel, but in more weighty matters payment in money is exacted. This preliminary being settled, the priest gets to work, and proves it by some visible or audible sign, such as a cough or a yawn, which everybody knows to signify the arrival of the deity. For example, the priest of the god Augel, who sits close by the doorway of his house, touches the covering of the door and says, "Step in!" Thereupon his appearance suddenly changes to that of an old man. His right leg and arm quiver, his left eye is closed, his whole face distorted into a grin expressive of the feebleness of old age. "What willst thou of me?" he asks the petitioner, who has now the privilege of conversing face to face with the deity incarnate in the priest. The interview may last for hours, and in such a case the priest must have a strong will if he is to play the part of the deity successfully throughout; for he must not only give the appropriate answers, but keep up that quivering motion of one half of his body which is the visible token of his inspiration.[1]

Inspired women wives of the gods.

But most priests in their moments of inspiration speak from behind a curtain, so that the audience can only hear their feigned voices giving the divine response. Some important priests communicate only with their wives, who, in such cases, take the place of the male medium or priest. These women assume the divine title of Amlahey or Mother, and it is not thought at all unnatural if one of them gives birth to a child. The infant is fathered on the god, for no mortal man would dare to engage in an intrigue with a woman who passes for the wife of a god and for a goddess in her own person; such a sacrilege would be avenged by the insulted god, who would punish the sinner with wasting sickness and lingering death. The offspring of the sacred marriage is distinguished by being allowed to go about with his hair hanging down, but otherwise no particular attention appears to be paid to him. When a woman acts as intermediary between the godhead and mankind, she takes the offering and retires with it into a closed chamber, where she may be heard conversing with the deity.[2]

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 33.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 34.

Young men as priestesses.

It often happens that a goddess chooses a young man to be her priestess. In that case the chosen vessel is regarded and treated exactly like a woman. On occasions he puts on female attire and wears a piece of money on his neck. Often, too, like a woman, he cultivates a patch of taro.[1]

Honours and wealth of priests.

As most priests not only profess to represent the deity, but claim to enjoy divine honours, they are treated as equal or superior to chiefs, even though they happen to be commoners. When the drink is passed round at the public assemblies, the first cup is presented to them in the name of the deity. Money offered by the pious is the perquisite of the priests; and though in matters of small importance people usually offer money of merely fictitious value, in serious cases the offering may be very valuable, and consequently a priest is always rich. After military expeditions a part of the booty was regularly offered to the gods, and so passed into the coffers of the priests. Where the god was at the same time the political ruler of the country, his priest naturally enjoyed all the prerogatives of the deity whom he represented. To a certain extent the priest was even exempt from the shackles of custom which lay heavy on other people; hence he could introduce innovations which nobody else would dare to attempt.[2]

The priest's house the temple.

The priest's house is regarded as the permanent temple and abode of the deity. There the priest resides with his family, and there he receives the visitors who come to consult him.

Shrines of the gods.

But generally every god of a district has also a shrine, consisting of a miniature house like the Shinto shrines of the Japanese. Ordinarily the shrine stands near the principal club-house or council-house, and offerings are deposited in it at certain times, as when the people go out to the fishing or are about to hold a dancing-festival. The offering consists merely of a coco-nut. From time to time the shrine is provided with a new roof and hung with coco-nut leaves. For the most part the clan gods have similar, but smaller shrines, which are set up near the dwelling-houses. Often a large house, in the style of a club-house

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 35.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 35.

(*bay*), is dedicated to a god and left vacant. This seems to happen either when, in consequence of the decrease of the population, old club-houses stand empty, or when, after a successful war, the conquerors despoiled the vanquished of a particularly fine club-house and carried it off to their village, where they consecrated it to one of their own gods.[1]

Seats of the gods.

Many gods have a seat, which sometimes consists of a small rounded stone resting on the top of a stone pillar and set up near the god's shrine. One god in Ngabiul has in front of his house a huge square block of basalt, which is regarded as his seat. Formerly, when a man professed to be inspired by the deity, he used to come hither and leap on the stone, without the help of his hands, in proof of the reality of his inspiration. If he succeeded, his claim was admitted; he was indeed a god-possessed man. But most deities have no permanent seats. Only in Arekolong there are some houses where the gods are occasionally accommodated with little wooden seats. That happens when it has been ascertained by divination that the clan deity desires to get a new garment. In such cases a square board, adorned with some simple carvings and painted red, yellow, and white, is hung up by four strings to a corner of the house, and a woman's skirt is deposited on it as an offering to the goddess in answer to her request.[2]

Sacred animals of the gods.

Lastly, almost all the gods of districts have certain sacred animals, which correspond to the totems (*adalsahels*) of the clans and doubtless originated in them. Among these sacred animals are the shark, the sting-ray, the night heron (*Nycticorax*), the gannet (*Dysporus*), the puffin, and a species of crab. About almost all these creatures myths and legends are told. For example, tradition relates how the puffin became a divine bird. It was in this way. A puffin once lived in a house at Kloukoygul, in the island of Eylmalk, where the family had reared it. To evince its gratitude the bird used to fly out to sea and to supply its benefactors with the fish which it caught. But once on

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 35 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 37 *sq.*

its return it could find the familiar house no more: the whole village had been attacked and destroyed by enemies. For a long time the puffin flew about seeking its mother, and at last it found her in Engkasar. A song celebrates the reunion of mother and daughter; the inhabitants paid homage to the bird, and to this day they feed puffins and keep some of them tame.[1]

Festival of kite-flying.

In Rathman, where the gannet (*Dysporus*) is a sacred bird, the inhabitants celebrate at irregular intervals a festival of kite-flying, apparently in honour of the gannet, for they call the kites by the name of the bird. From time to time the god commands his worshippers to make a kite with a long tail. Then the whole population of the town repairs to some heights which are free from wood, and there they let the big kite mount up in the air. Nowhere else in the Pelew Islands do the people hold such a festival of kite-flying.[2]

Prayers and offerings.

Divination.

As a rule, prayers are put up and offerings presented to the gods only in emergencies, when the divine help is wanted. Usually it is sickness which obliges the natives to appeal to their deities. In that case they have first to ascertain, by means of divination (*honglil* or *manglil*), what god is the cause of the illness. The modes of divination are very various, for in the Pelew Islands this pseudo-art has been highly developed. The secrets of the profession are strictly preserved in the family, and the practice of the art is lucrative, for naturally the practitioners do not divine for nothing. Among the methods of divination we may note the observation of the clouds, which is resorted to especially in war and in matters which concern the whole community. Again, there is divination by breaking a cocoanut and observing the fragments; this is often employed in sickness, before a campaign, and on a fishing expedition organized by the paramount chief. Only male diviners employ this mode of divination. Another mode of divination is practised only by women. On receiving her fee, which is commonly a plate of tortoise-shell, the female

Various modes of divination.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 38 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 39; *id.*, *Die socialen Einrichtungen der Pelauer*, pp. 122 *sq.*, note.

diviner goes with it to a tree of a particular sort, and then by means of her incantations she can inform her employer what god is causing the sickness. Another mode of divination, practised only by women, is to derive inspiration from the chewing of betel. Again, omens are drawn from a spider's web, or by measuring a spear in a certain way, or by rolling up a thread in the hand, or by breaking an areca nut and examining the surface of the pieces, or by knocking a hole in an empty coco-nut shell and noticing the edges of the aperture thus produced. Again, the diviner may lay some coco-nut shells beside a fire, and draw his conclusions from the way in which the shells crack or are singed under the action of the heat. Or he may take a handful of betel leaves and areca nuts and throw them up in the air; from the way in which they fall, and from the order in which they lie on the ground, he infers the success or failure of the undertaking in hand. This way of questioning the fates is only resorted to when it is proposed to steal women from other communities. A simple way of prying into the future is to hack a stick with a knife and examine the notches, which give the required answer. Further, the sage may divine from the observation of snakes, from the hooting of an owl by night, or the cry of a halcyon by day.[1]

Offerings to the gods for the sick.

Thus the methods of divining are very various, but the results are no doubt in all cases equally valuable. When, in the case of sickness, the diviner has ascertained what god is angry with the sick man, the next thing to do is to discover what the deity wants, in other words, what he will take to pardon the offender and restore him to health. If the offended deity is a goddess, as commonly happens, she may want a pig, a goat, or a turtle, for her private consumption. The animal is accordingly procured, and taking it with them the diviner and the patient repair to the spot where the deity resides. That is why all sick people return home, should they be overtaken by illness in a foreign land; for their home is also the home of their god. Usually the members of the family carve a miniature house to represent a shrine, and with it they go on pilgrimage. Arrived on the spot, they set up the little shrine or hang it on a tree,

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 40-42.

slaughter the pig or other victim, and make a meal of its flesh. If after that the patient should chance to recover, the cure is naturally ascribed to the direct interposition of the mollified deity.[1]

Dances for the healing of the sick.

Should the patient be a woman who is with child for the first time, the deity commonly asks for a dance (*moloik*). The dance lasts three days, but the preparations for it occupy a month and are very costly. Dancing-festivals thus ordained for the healing of the sick are of various sorts. The simplest of them is for the healing of a little child. Only a single household is responsible for it. The women of the house invite some female friends, and they dance together; it is a private affair. On more important occasions the whole population of a village takes part in the festival, men and women dancing separately in front of the house, and receiving an ample supply of food to stimulate and reward their exertions for the benefit of the sick. Sometimes these dances last several days, and much taro and flesh-meat have to be provided for the women dancers. While some of the women dance on the stone platform in front of the patient's house, others sing songs in the intervals of the dance. Songs and dances alike are dedicated to the deity who is causing the illness, in the hope of softening his or her hard heart, and so procuring relief for the sufferer.[2] One of these festivals, which bears the name of *murkal-shimmel*, lasts a month and requires the co-operation of the whole clan. A high wooden stage is erected and the women dance on it, but behind a curtain of leaves, so that they are not visible to the public. The taro consumed at such a festival amounts to hundreds of baskets, and the cost is so considerable that all the women relatives contribute money to defray the expense.[3]

Animals sacrificed to the gods for the sick.

Sometimes, when the patient is a chief of high rank, he remains at home while a number of young men, members of a club, take his money and offer it on his behalf to the deity, while they sing songs in front of the god's house. But most commonly an animal victim is the price demanded

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 43.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 43 *sq.*

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 44 *sq.*

by the god for the healing of the sick, and this gives occasion to the natives to break jests on the greed of their gods.[1]

Importance of diviners.

The gods of districts play an important part in the councils of chiefs. No paramount chief would dare undertake any enterprise without first consulting the diviner (*korong*). Hence a visit to a diviner is a necessary preliminary to every negotiation with another state or community. In the political intrigues carried on between the petty states into which the islands are, or used to be, divided, the bribing of a diviner is, or was formerly, a common occurrence. No war was undertaken without first imploring the assistance of the deity, and from his answer, communicated by the diviner, the outcome of the enterprise was prognosticated.[2]

The gods of nature.

But the popular religion of the Pelew Islanders is far from being limited to the worship of the great gods who preside over districts and clans. Indeed, that worship is rather the affair of the chiefs and rulers than of the people. The real religion of the ordinary man is concerned with the gods of nature who can help or harm him in every action of his life. His imagination peoples the whole of nature—the sea, the forest, the earth—with numerous gods, and whatever he sets his hand to, whether it be to catch fish or to fell a tree, he must propitiate the deities, or rather guard against their anger, which can only be done by certain spells and incantations. But the knowledge of these spells is confined to a comparatively few individuals and forms the secret of the various arts and crafts. The master-builder, for example, as we have seen,[3] is not he who can build a good house or canoe, but he who, by virtue of his magical power (*golay*), can ban the tree-gods and so prevent them from harming the workmen who fell the trees, and from molesting the people who afterwards inhabit the house or sail in the canoe which has been built of that timber. All these gods of the earth, the forest, the mountains and the brooks, are very malignant and dangerous; most sicknesses are caused by them; hence

Need of magic to counteract the anger of the gods of nature.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 45 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 45.

[3] Above, pp. 213 *sqq.*

persons who can control and sway them by magic are dreaded, but at the same time these magicians are constantly employed and well paid for their services, though in extreme cases they are looked upon as sorcerers and treated accordingly. For example, if a master-builder who knows the spells and incantations of his trade is dissatisfied with his wages, he instigates the tree-god to avenge the wrong which he, the tree-god, suffered when the woodmen cut down his trees and converted them into house-timber. The consequence of the wrath of the tree-spirit is that the inmates of the house at whom the builder has a spite fall ill and will die if no remedy is applied. So they must either soothe the angry builder or get somebody else to appease the tree-gods who, egged on by the builder, are doing the mischief.[1] Again, if a man is jealous of another and desires his death, but dare not murder him with his own hands or hire a bravo to do the deed, he will pay a sorcerer to destroy his enemy by magic, promising him a larger reward when he has rid him of his detested rival. Again, if a woman has laid out a piece of land on the hills for the cultivation of turmeric, but has failed to give the local gods due notice of her intention, she is sure to incur the wrath of some one of the injured deities. The same thing happens to the huntsman who goes into the forest to hunt, and to the woodman who fells a tree, without apprising the sylvan gods of his intention and obtaining their consent.[2]

Dangerous power wielded by the magician.

The knowledge of the various sorts of magic or charms (*golays*) is a secret carefully guarded by its possessor, who only reveals it at the point of death to a son or other near relation. These charms are so powerful that they prolong the life of their owner; hence when he lies sick to death it is customary for a relation to receive from him the precious legacy with all possible speed, not only lest it should perish with him, but also to shorten the sufferings of the dying man; for so long as he keeps the secret to himself, so long will it be difficult for him to expire. But should the agony be prolonged even after the secret is out, the friends of the magician kindly hasten his dissolution by stopping up

Knowledge of magic a carefully guarded secret.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 46 *sq.*.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 47.

his mouth with bitter leaves or his nose with capsicum pepper.[1]

The profession of magician is lucrative but dangerous.

The possession of charms is lucrative, for there are always plenty of credulous people ready to pay the magician for his services. Yet the profession of magician is not without its dangers. For if a man of mark dies under circumstances which point to the use of magic for his taking off, the suspicion may be resolved into certainty by recourse to divination; or the ghost of the deceased may personally accuse his murderer at the inquest, at which, as we have seen, the ghost obligingly puts in his evidence through the medium of a nosegay.[2] Such an accusation naturally directs an unpleasant amount of attention to the magician; public feeling is excited against him, and if suspicion should fall on him a second time, his fate is sealed; he is put to death as a sorcerer, with the consent not only of the chiefs of the clans, but even of his own relations, who dare not shield the doomed man in face of the public obloquy. Such persons, who were often very old women, used to be killed with a particular kind of spear; in modern times they are secretly shot or strangled.[3]

Particular gods. Horgim the war-god.

To come now to the consideration of particular gods, we may begin with Horgim, the god of war. The tradition concerning his origin runs as follows. Once on a time a man named Iraria was cutting bamboos in the island of Arekolong. While he was in the act of severing one of them, a voice from inside the bamboo called out to him to beware. Alarmed at the sound, Iraria retired, but, anxious to get the bamboo, he returned and hewed at it again. The warning was repeated a second time, and again the woodman fled. At last he plucked up courage and felled the bamboo, whereupon the god stood revealed. The deity introduced himself to the astonished mortal, bade him be brave, and promised him good luck in war. Moreover, he taught him how to make spears, and so forth.[4]

Invocation of the war-god.

This war god is much feared by young men. They dare not call him by his real name of Horgim, but use the

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 47.

[2] Above, p. 238.

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 47 *sq.*

[4] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 48.

name of Iraria instead. When an expedition is about to go forth to war and anybody makes a new spear, he hangs it up in the house for the night and prays to the war god, imploring his help. He pays attention to every circumstance, and notes especially any ominous sounds; for if Horgim, the war god, is propitious, he gives his answer through a small sort of gecko or a little insect, which is a good omen. Encouraged by this intimation of the divine favour, the warrior rushes into the thickest of the fray, otherwise he will lag behind. When a man has slain an enemy and is about to cut off his head, he must first look up and cry to the war god, "Horgim, I give you notice, here draw I from the fresh vat." By the vat, a large earthenware vessel in which syrup is kept, he means the body of the foe, whose decapitated neck he compares to the mouth of the vessel, and whose blood he implicitly likens to the syrup stored in the vat, which is dedicated to the god. Should he fail to utter this invocation, the spouting blood would bespatter him, and he would be ailing for a long time. Hence an experienced warrior never fails thus to consecrate the head of the foeman to the god before he decapitates him.[1]

Sick man possessed by the war-god: exorcism of the deity.

Often the war god, discontented with a long peace, enters into a man and makes him sick. When the cause of the sickness has been ascertained, the friends of the sufferer undertake to drive the god out of his body. Now in the land of Ngarulang there is a stone dedicated to Horgim, and at it a part of the ceremony, consisting of a sacrifice and a common meal, is observed. The other part of the ceremony is a sham fight. With loud cries all the men shower mock spears, consisting of the soft stalks of plants, at the man possessed of the god, and the patient retorts in kind. If the sick man, who is always very moody and lethargic, cannot be persuaded to leave the house, he is attacked with a loud tumult of war in his own dwelling, and the surprise startles him so, that he snatches up a spear and pursues the imaginary foe, after which his recovery may

1 J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 49. Wars have no doubt been long suppressed by the European authorities. When Kubary resided in the islands they were still independent.

confidently be expected. Such a man passes for a temporary incarnation of Horgim, but he receives no particular attentions, unless it be, at the most, an offering of areca nuts and a request for his advice in cases like his own.[1]

Gods of the sea.

Gods of the land.

The gods of sea and land are very numerous. The master-fisherman must invoke all the sea-gods and sacrifice to them coco-nuts, taro, flowers, and so forth.[2] The gods of the land are no less numerous. For example, there are two brothers and a sister who are the patrons of pigeon-shooting. Among the secret customs observed in connexion with this trinity is the hanging of certain small mats on certain trees. Other deities are also connected with the favourite sport of pigeon-shooting. For example, there is a god of a certain wooded district where pigeons abound, and the birds are thought to be his children. Among the deities of the desert islands there is one who appears in the likeness of a beautiful woman to the mariners who land in the island. She approaches them and sues their favour, and if they are courageous and do not run away, they are successful in catching turtles. Again, there is a sylvan deity who meets men in the forest in the guise of an old woman with hanging breasts, and when she falls in with people she hides them under her breasts. Then there is a god or mischievous spirit who haunts the shore, and when people come back from the fishing, he follows them and demands some of their catch. Indeed, almost every place has its god or spirit, and when woodmen fell a tree in the forest the master-woodman must recite his spells to induce or compel the spirit of the tree to quit its abode in the trunk and to settle on another tree. Besides reciting the spells the master-woodman splits a coco-nut in two and pours the milk on the bole; after that the tree can be cut down with impunity.[3]

The gods of nature very ancient.

This religion of nature still endures and exerts on the minds of the natives a much deeper influence than the political religion, as we may call it, of the district gods, who do not deign to occupy themselves with all the petty details of daily life. Hence we may fairly infer that these gods of

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 49 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 50 *sq.* See above, pp. 209 *sq.*

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 51 *sq.* See also above, p. 214.

nature belong to the earliest stratum of Pelew religion,[1] for it is commonly the most primitive elements of a people's creed that are the most deeply rooted and survive the longest.

§ 5. *Myths and Tales*

The god Obakad.

Among these ancient deities of nature is one named Obakad, whose attributes are many, though his character is somewhat vague. He is said to rule the earth and to dwell in old trees. He is well disposed to mankind. Among other benefits he taught men to kindle fire and to cook taro. The most important of the myths relating to him is one of a great flood which overtook the islands.[2] It runs as follows:

Story of a great flood caused by the anger of the gods.

In the days before the present race of men came into being, the Pelew Islands were inhabited by the gods, who were very mighty, and did wonders, and walked about the earth, just as men do now. But one of the gods named Athndokl came to Eyrray and was killed by the natives. Then all the rest of the seven gods that were friends of each other went in search of him, and they came to the same place. Now the inhabitants of that place were known to be wicked and proud, and they gave the gods a very churlish reception. Only there was one old woman called Milathk, who lodged them in her house and acquainted them with the murder of their fellow god Athndokl. Full of grief and rage, the gods resolved to avenge the death of their comrade; but to requite the old woman for her friendly behaviour they determined to save her from the general doom. So they advised her to make ready a raft and to fasten it by a rope of creepers to a tree. About the time of full moon a great flood set in, which covered the whole of Pelew; but the good old dame floated about on her raft, until even her rope proved too short, and she perished in the waves. Her dead body drifted about and at last caught by the hair in a thicket. Afterwards, when the gods came down to earth to seek for their aged friend, they found her dead and lamented her sad fate. But the eldest of the gods resolved to restore her to life, and he did so by breathing

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 52 *sq.*

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 53.

How mankind was deprived of immortality.

his own breath into her bosom. More than that, he wished to make her immortal, and for that purpose he needed the Water of Immortality, which one of his comrades should have fetched for him. But one of the gods, named Tariit, who had his image or representative in a species of rail-bird (*Rallus pectoralis*), was wicked and would not consent that men should be immortal. So he persuaded the *karamal* tree (*Hibiscus populneus*) to prick the taro leaf in which the Water of Immortality was brought. The tree did so by means of a withered and seemingly insignificant twig. So the water all ran away, and thus the old woman Milathk lost the boon of immortality. But on the other hand the treacherous tree, by contact with the wonder-working water, acquired such a tenacity of life that its smallest shoot, if planted in the earth, buds and grows up into a tree. But Obakad in his wrath punished the traitor Tariit, and down to this day Tariit's bird, the rail, bears the mark of his punishment in a broad red stripe on the top of his head, and ever since Tariit has been the symbol of wickedness and ugliness. But as for Milathk, she stayed in Aremolunguy and became the mother of mankind.[1]

Comparison of the Pelew story with the story in Genesis.

This Micronesian myth combines the legend of a great flood with a story which attempts to explain how men were deprived of the boon of immortality which the deity had intended to bestow on them. It is interesting to observe that the treacherous agent of this heavy loss contrived to appropriate the boon of which he had robbed our species; for, by spilling the Water of Immortality on himself instead of on the Mother of Mankind, the *Hibiscus populneus* obtained an unlimited length of life, since all his shoots grow up into new trees. This so far confirms the view that in the original form of the narrative in Genesis the serpent who beguiled our first parents profited by his deceit, himself eating of the fruit of the Tree of Life and so acquiring for himself and his species the gift of immortality which the beneficent Deity had designed for men.[2]

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 53-55. Another slightly different version of the same story is reported by K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 195 *sq.* I have reproduced it in *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 253 *sq.*

[2] *Folk-lore in the Old Testament*, i. 45 *sqq.*

Story of the creation of mankind.

The Pelew Islanders have also a tradition of the creation of mankind, which bears a certain resemblance to the story of the creation of Adam and Eve in the second chapter of Genesis. They say that a certain brother and sister formed the first men out of earth kneaded with the blood of various animals, such as the rat, the serpent, and the cock; and that, they say, is why men are thievish, sneaking, brave, and so forth, just like the creatures out of whose blood they have been compounded. They tell, too, how the first woman, out of modesty, covered her person with leaves, like Adam and Eve when they discovered their nakedness in the garden of Eden.[1]

Story of the creation of the sun and moon.

The first men thus created fought for a long time with their neighbours in the south, until at last it grew light in the Pelew Islands; for mankind existed on earth before the creation of the sun and moon. The same divine brother and sister, who had created the first men, created also the two great lights of heaven and set them in the sky. It was the intention and decree of their creators that the sun and moon, as brother and sister, should keep pace together in the celestial vault. But the moon paid no attention to the divine ordinance; for she was pleasure-loving, and instead of walking with her brother the sun she went gadding about, and so fell far behind him on his daily journey across the sky. That is why to this day the sun, a being of a steady character and regular habits, traverses the heaven alone by day, while his frivolous and lagging sister hurries after him by night. That, too, is why man labours by day, but gives himself up to pleasure and pastime on moonlight nights. However, all these people created by the divine brother and sister were not really human; they were gods and never died, until they were finally destroyed by the great flood in the time of Milathk, our First Mother. The present race of mortal men are her descendants. As soon as it grew light, the pair of creators vanished, leaving behind them only two great rocks, which you may see at Ngel down to this very day.[2]

The natives also tell stories about the sun, and these

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 56.

[2] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 56 *sq.*

Stories about the sun.

tales, like many others, are figured in the carvings which adorn the gable-ends of the club-houses. Thus they relate how the house of the sun is in the west, under the sea. At the spot where the sun goes down there grows a *denges* tree (*Rhizophora macrorhiza*), just like the tree of the same sort which in the islands forms thick groves on the shore of the sea. When the sun comes to the tree, he plucks some of the fruits and throws them into the water. The sharks, which keep watch at the entrance to the Land of the Sun, gobble up the fruits, and while their attention is thus distracted, the sun dives down unnoticed to his house at the bottom of the sea.[1]

Story of men who visited the sun in his house.

These particulars were ascertained by some men, who paid a visit to the sun in his house at the bottom of the sea. It happened in this way. In the village of Ngargeukl, on the lee side of the island of Pililu, there were once on a time four men who made up their minds to visit the setting sun. So they rowed away westward, and came to the *denges* tree just at the time when the sun was about to plunge into the sea. Informed of their purpose, the sun bade them let their canoes drift, while they themselves were to follow him quickly. They obeyed, and soon found themselves in a new land and a fine house, where the sun entertained them with good cheer. It is true that the portions of food served out to them were exceedingly small, but then they did not grow less with the eating. When they would return home, their canoes had drifted away, so the sun shut them up in a thick bamboo, a tree then unknown in the Pelew Islands. In the bamboo the four men floated home, and, disembarking, left the bamboo to take care of itself on the beach. After that, they were made chiefs of the land, while the former chiefs were deposed; and ever since their village of Ngargeukl has been looked on as the Land of the Sun. But the bamboo which they had left on the shore drifted away to another island, where it struck root and in time grew into a forest. To this day the natives of districts that abound in bamboos laugh at the people of Ngargeukl for neglecting so useful a tree; but in recognition of their prior rights the natives

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 57.

of Ngargeukl are not only free to cut bamboos elsewhere, but may even enter any house and fetch away a ready-made mast from it.[1]

Another version of the story.

According to one version of the story the four men did not at once return home from the house of the sun, but accompanied the great luminary on his journey across the sky. But when they looked down from heaven and saw their friends lamenting and running about in search of them, they began to weep. The sun observed it, and asked them why they were crying. Fearing to tell him the truth, they said, "There is so much smoke in thy house, oh sun, that our eyes water." But the sun saw what was the matter, and in compassion he sent them home floating in a bamboo. The rest of the story is much the same as in the other version.[2]

Story of a man and woman in the moon.

The islanders tell a story of a man and woman in the moon. They say that they are a couple who, growing weary of earth, desired to quit it. So they betook themselves to their home at a place called the Cliff of the Moon. There one night, when the moon drew near, they contrived to clamber up into it along the neck of a snake, and in the moon they have lived ever since, subsisting on the fruit of a solitary orange-tree. Another version of the tale relates how, while a husband was fishing by the light of the moon, his wife went out into the moonshine with her child and cried to the moon, "Come, take thy child!" But when the moon came and demanded the child, the mother was afraid and begged the moon to wait for her husband. When he returned from the fishing, they all resolved to go to the moon together.[3]

Story of the Swan Maiden type.

The Pelew islanders tell a story which conforms to a well-known and widely diffused type of folk-tale commonly known as the Swan Maiden story or Beauty and the Beast. It runs thus: A certain man named Akapekemek used to tap palm-trees for toddy. But every night when he visited the vessels which he had hung on the trees, he found that they were empty. So he lay in wait to see who was robbing

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 57 *sq.*

[2] K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, pp. 332-334.

[3] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 58.

The man who married a fish and lost her.

him of the toddy. Well, one night he saw how a fish came out of the sea, laid aside its tail, and climbed up the palm-tree in human form. So he snatched the tail and carried it home, where he hung it up in the little hut or shrine adjoining the house. Next morning when he went to collect the toddy, he found a woman under one of the palms. She called to him that she was naked and begged him to bring her a skirt. He did so, and when he had collected the toddy, the two went to the house together, and the woman became Akapekemek's wife. Her name was Dhilathuguu (*Coryphaena*). She bore him a daughter, who grew up to be a very beautiful maiden. One day there came chiefs from a distance on a visit, and the wife had to entertain them. Not knowing where her husband had laid the pestle for pounding taro, she sent her daughter to ask him. He answered that it was in the little hut or shrine adjoining the house. The mother went to look for it in the little hut, and what should she see there but her old fish's tail, which her husband had carried off, and which had been hanging in the hut for many a year. At sight of it a great yearning for her old home in the sea came over her. Some time after she told her daughter, that in case she, the mother, should be long away, she, the daughter, should cleave to her father. That same evening she secretly took the tail, ran down to the shore, and plunged into the sea. So she vanished, hasting to her old home and leaving her human husband and child forlorn.[1]

Story of the origin of the Pelew Islands.

The natives also tell a story of the origin of the Pelew Islands. They say that in the island of Augyaur there lived a girl called Kwap who grew to such a gigantic height that her head was quite invisible to the naked eye of people on the ground. They were afraid of her, and collecting dry brushwood about her legs they set it on fire. Down fell the giantess and broke in pieces, and these pieces are the Pelew Islands. The name Kwap is almost identical with

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 60 *sq.* A similar story, in briefer form and with variations of details, is told in Yap. See above, p. 199. There is a long sequel to the Pelew story, in the course of which the sea-woman's grandson, Athmolokoth, visits his grandmother in her home in the sea, and recovers from her a valuable fish-hook which he had lost and she had swallowed. See J. Kubary, *op. cit.* i. 61-65.

the name of the island of Yap, as pronounced by the natives, and as there are many indications that the natives of Yap and of the Pelew Islands at one time formed a single people, it is possible that this story of the origin of the Pelew Islands contains a reminiscence of their old relationship with Yap.[1]

§ 6. *The Evolution of Pelew Religion*

Kubary on the evolution of Pelew religion.

The Polish ethnographer Kubary, whose valuable account of the Pelew religion I have summarized in the preceding pages, distinguishes three elements in the religion, to wit, a worship of ancestral spirits, a worship of nature, and a worship of heroes. He appears to suppose that these elements represent three successive stages in the evolution of the religion. The first stage of all, according to him, was the belief in the survival of the spirits of the dead, of whose posthumous existence the most solid proof was furnished by their appearance to the living in dreams or in waking visions. Originally these disembodied spirits were believed to inhabit certain sacred animals and fish; but in time men's imagination took a stronger flight and personified the whole of nature by peopling it with the souls of their departed kinsfolk. This worship of nature was the second stage in the evolution of Pelew religion. The third and final stage was the worship of heroes, that is of men who had distinguished themselves in life, whether or not they were related to the worshipper by ties of blood. Thus on Kubary's theory the religion of the Pelew Islanders began and ended with the worship of the dead, after passing through an intermediate stage in the worship of nature, which, according to him, was only the worship of the dead in a disguised form. Whether this scheme of evolution is correct or not, I do not presume to say. But, having closely followed Kubary's exposition of Pelew religion in the preceding pages, I have thought it right to state his general conclusion; so far as I could disentangle it from the somewhat crabbed and elusive German

The three stages.

Fundamental importance of the worship of the dead.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 66. This legend of the origin of the Pelew Islands is reported, with more details, by K. Semper, *Die Palau-Inseln*, p. 194. He calls the giantess Akuab.

in which it is set forth.[1] If he is right, we must conclude that the worship of the dead is the fundamental feature of Pelew religion.

[1] J. Kubary, "Die Religion der Pelauer," *op. cit.* i. 66-68. In this passage the author does not clearly define what he appears to regard as the third stage of the evolution, namely the worship of high gods who, on analysis, turn out to be the spirits of the heroic dead. To follow his thought on this subject it is necessary to recur to an earlier part of his exposition. See above, pp. 242 *sqq.* Kubary's essay, "Die Religion der Pelauer," is dated "Ngarupesang, Pelau-Inseln, im Oktober 1883." Thus it was written at a time when the islands were practically independent. The condition of religion and society which he described has doubtless changed greatly since then.

CHAPTER IX

THE BELIEF IN IMMORTALITY AMONG THE MARIANNE ISLANDERS

§ 1. *The Marianne or Ladrone Islands*

THE Marianne or Ladrone Islands are the most northerly part of Micronesia. They lie in a single regular chain extending north and south for a length of five hundred miles between 13° and 21° North latitude, and at a distance of about 400 leagues east of the Philippines. The number of the islands is seventeen; their total area is 450 square miles. The principal islands from south to north are Guam (Guahan), Rota, Tinian, and Saipan.[1] Situation of the Marianne Islands.

All the islands are hilly or mountainous. The southern islands are the lower, but the flat or hilly ground in them is here and there diversified by a small mountain; the rocks are mainly coralline limestone, but volcanic rocks occur in some of the islands, particularly in Guam. On the other hand the loftier islands in the north are of purely volcanic formation, and active volcanoes exist in several of them. The small island of Assonsong or Assumption (Asuncion) is little more than a volcano nearly 3000 feet high, its steep sides rent by deep gullies. Earthquakes are not uncommon and sometimes prove very destructive. The coasts of the southern islands are more or less skirted by reefs, whereas the northern islands are free from them. All the islands are Description of the islands.

[1] L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde*, *Historique*, ii. Première Partie (Paris, 1829) p. 228; F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 553. For a general account of the islands and their inhabitants, see C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 387 *sqq.* The fullest history and description are those of L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.*

for the most part thickly wooded ; the vegetation is luxuriant and compares not unfavourably even with that of the Moluccas and the Philippines, which it resembles in character. Cryptogamous plants of all sorts flourish in the damp climate : orchids abound : the palms include the coco-nut palm and the areca palm. The climate, though tropical, is healthy ; in comparison with that of the Philippines it is temperate and refreshing.[1]

The island of Guam.

Guam, the most southerly island of the archipelago, is at the same time the largest and most important. It was long the seat of the Spanish government. The length of the island is thirty-two miles. The soil is fertile, and the vegetation exuberant from the edge of the water to the tops of the hills. However, in many parts of the interior the woods have been injudiciously cut down ; in consequence the land is there covered only with thickets and underwood, and what used to be brimming rivers have been reduced to scanty brooks. The northern part of the island is arid and waterless, as the rain there runs away in the clefts of the limestone rock. The population, which towards the end of the nineteenth century was estimated at 9000, lives mainly in the capital Agaña and on the coast. The country inland is almost uninhabited. The scenery about the capital is said to afford views which cannot be excelled for natural beauty.[2]

§ 2. *History*

Discovery and conquest of the islands by Spain.

The Marianne Islands were discovered on 6th March 1521 by Magellan, on the famous voyage which he undertook at the command of Charles the Fifth of Spain. But his relations with the islanders were unfriendly, and after killing a few of them and burning many of their houses, he sailed away to pursue his explorations in the west. On account of the thievish propensities of the natives he named the islands *Los Ladrones*, "the Robbers."[3] But Spain did

[1] C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 388, 389, 395 *sq.* ; F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 554, 555.

[2] C. E. Meinicke, *Die Inseln des Stillen Oceans*, ii. 390 ; F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 555, 556.

[3] "Pigafetta's Voyage round the World," in J. Pinkerton's *General Collection of Voyages and Travels*, xi. (London, 1812) pp. 324-326 ; J.

not take effectual measures to secure possession of the islands until 1668, when the Spanish Jesuit, Diego Luis de Sanvitores, the scion of an illustrious house of Old Castile, landed and established a Catholic mission. He named the islands the Mariannes, partly, it would seem, in honour of the Virgin, and partly in honour of his royal patroness Marie Anne of Austria, wife of Philip the Fourth of Spain, who had warmly interested herself in the project of preaching Christianity to the islanders.[1] Thenceforth, for a period of some thirty years, the natives waged an heroic, but fruitless, war with the Spaniards in defence of their liberty and ancient customs; defeated again and again, they rose in rebellion time after time, until at last, decimated by war and by diseases, till then unknown among them, they sullenly submitted to the arms of the conquerors. By the year 1699 the stubborn resistance of the islanders came to an end, and the subjugation of the islands was complete. The population of the islands, which the Spaniards estimated at fifty thousand in 1668, had dwindled to three or four thousand at the beginning of the eighteenth century.[2] At the present day, we are told, not one of the original race survives, and the islands are peopled chiefly with Tagales and Bisayans, imported from the Philippines, with a few Caroline islanders and numerous half breeds.[3]

Extinction of the old race.

§ 3. *The Ancient Inhabitants and their Mode of Life*

Our knowledge of the ancient inhabitants, now extinct, is very imperfect. Such as it is, we owe it chiefly to a history of the islands published by the Jesuit Charles le

Le Gobien's *History*.

Burney, *Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean*, i. (London, 1803) pp. 57-59; L. de Freycinet, *Voyage autour du Monde, Historique*, ii. Première Partie, pp. 164 *sq.*

[1] Charles Le Gobien, *Histoire des Isles Marianes* (Paris, 1700), pp. 6 *sqq.*, 39 *sqq.*, 79; L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 170 *sq.*

[2] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 163; C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 397, 410. According to Le Gobien (*Histoire des Isles Marianes*, p. 46), the population of Guam alone was more than 30,000, the population of Saipan was a little less, and that of the rest of the islands in proportion.

[3] F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 554. In view of the rapid decrease of the native population the Spanish government in 1741 ordained that five or six Tagal families should be imported as colonists every second year. See L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 216; C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 397.

Gobien in 1700. The great bulk of the work consists of a narrative of the conquest and nominal conversion of the natives by the Spaniards between the years 1668 and 1699; but to this narrative is prefixed a general description of the natives, their ancient manners, institutions, and religion. The description is brief and slight,[1] but it remains our principal authority on the subject, and in what follows I shall draw mainly upon it. It does not appear that the author had himself visited the islands, but his work is no doubt based on contemporary Spanish documents, probably for the most part the letters of the missionaries.

The Chamorris or Chamorros.

The ancient inhabitants of the Marianne Islands are commonly, but perhaps incorrectly, known as Chamorris or Chamorros. They are said to have been unquestionably a Micronesian people, most closely related to the Caroline Islanders, but in many respects also akin to the Tagales of Luzon.[2] According to Le Gobien, Chamorris was the name applied to the highest class of native nobility;[3] but according to Freycinet no such word exists in the Marianne language, and the name originated in a simple misunderstanding of the cry *Tcha-ma-oulin*, "Stop steering," which the islanders were heard to utter as a direction to the steersman when their canoes approached the Spanish ships.[4]

The origin of the natives.

With regard to the origin of the islanders, Le Gobien observes that "we do not know at what date these islands were inhabited, nor from what country the people derive their origin. As they have nearly the same tastes as the Japanese, and the same ideas of nobility (for their nobility is as proud and haughty as that of Japan), some have thought that these islanders came from Japan, which is only six or seven days distant from these islands. Others are persuaded that they issued from the Philippines and the neighbouring islands, because their complexion, their language, their customs, and their mode of government have much in common with those of the Tagales, who were the inhabitants of the Philippines before the Spaniards made themselves masters of the islands. It seems probable

[1] It occupies less than thirty small pages (pp. 42-70) out of more than four hundred pages.

[2] C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 397.

[3] Ch. Le Gobien, *Histoire des Isles Marianes*, p. 50.

[4] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 276.

enough that they derive their origin from both these peoples, and that these islands were peopled by some shipwrecked Japanese and Tagales who were cast away there by storms."[1]

Dense population.

Whatever the origin of the natives, the Spaniards at the date of the conquest found the islands thickly peopled; villages were scattered on the plains and the slopes of the mountains, some of them comprising a hundred or a hundred and fifty houses.[2]

Appearance of the natives.

The complexion of the people was sallow, but not so dark as that of the natives of the Philippines. They were stronger and more robust than Europeans. Their stature was tall, and their bodies well proportioned. Though they subsisted only on roots, fruits, and fish, they were so stout as almost to appear bloated; yet despite their bulk they were supple and agile. It was nothing uncommon among them to live to a hundred. In the first year when the Gospel was preached to them, it is said that among the converts were six score of a hundred years and over.[3]

Personal adornment.

The men went entirely naked and shaved themselves almost completely, leaving only a small tuft of hair on the top of their heads. The women, on the contrary, wore their hair very long and whitened it with a dye, while they were at pains to blacken their teeth with certain herbs, probably betel, white hair and black teeth being deemed the highest form of feminine beauty.[4] Unlike the other Micronesians, the Marianne Islanders appear never to have practised tattooing.[5]

Language.

Their language closely resembled that of the Tagales of the Philippines. It was pleasant to hear and to speak, for the pronunciation was soft and musical.[6]

Native stories and poems.

They told stories full of fabulous incidents, and they had even some poems, of which they were very proud. Poets were much admired among them; the mere title of poet sufficed to secure for a man respectful treatment everywhere. Their stories turned on the adventures of their ancestors, and these they loved

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *Histoire des Isles Marianes*, pp. 45 *sq.*

[2] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* p. 46.

[3] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 46 *sq.* There may have been some mistake as to the age of these neophytes. Few savages have any exact idea of their age, and they are apt, when questioned on the subject, to give answers very wide of the truth.

[4] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 47 *sq.*

[5] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 321.

[6] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* p. 48.

to rehearse. They were fond, too, of reciting the verses of the poets. In their assemblies twelve or thirteen women would stand in a ring and chant these poems, accompanying the song with the click of shells and with lively and appropriate gestures, singing withal so sweetly and harmoniously as to charm the ear as well as the eye. A fabulous cosmogony furnished the theme of some of the songs which they sang in these assemblies.[1]

Contentment of the people.

Before they had the misfortune to be discovered by Europeans, and to fall victims to ruthless conquerors and a fanatical priesthood, the simple natives of the Marianne Islands were happy and contented. In spite, or perhaps in virtue, of their ignorance and the absence of many material comforts which civilized nations are apt to deem indispensable, they thought themselves the wisest, the most polished, and the cleverest nation in the world; they looked down with pity on all other peoples, and spoke of them with contempt.[2]

Character of the people.

The character of this unfortunate people is depicted on the whole in an amiable light. They seem to have been of a kindly and confiding disposition, cheerful, light-hearted, and pleasure-loving, but somewhat fickle and inconstant, eager in the pursuit of a particular object at one moment, but ready to abandon it in the next. Far from being the thieves which Magellan accused them of being, they held both theft and murder in abhorrence; they had such perfect confidence in each other's honesty that they did not shut their houses but left everything open, and nobody took advantage of the opportunity to rob or pilfer. They were naturally liberal and ready to do a kindness. When a Spanish ship, the *Conception*, was wrecked on their coasts in 1638, the islanders received the survivors with great humanity and did everything in their power to alleviate their sufferings by all sorts of attention and hospitality. In their wars with the Spaniards they gave proof of their courage, valour, and an invincible love of freedom which led them to prefer death to slavery; yet they were not cruel or inhuman. The present population of half-breeds is said to

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 48 *sq.*, 57 *sq.*, 58 *sq.*, 63, 64.
[2] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* p. 49.

retain much of the kindliness and friendliness of their forefathers, if indeed any drops of the old blood still flow in their veins; but the old gaiety and light-heartedness are gone, crushed out by the weight of European oppression, and with them have gone the old industry and energy of the people. Their indolence, their listlessness, their poverty are now extreme; immorality is rampant among them; the efforts of the Spanish missionaries and the Spanish government to give them a European education would seem to have produced but little effect.[1] Such are the melancholy results which have flowed from the contact of this once happy and thriving people with the civilization and the religion of the West. Present state of the population.

The ancient inhabitants were divided into three social ranks or classes, to wit, the nobility (*matuas*), the commoners (*mangachang*), and a middle class of demi-nobles (*achaot*) intermediate between the other two. The nobles were excessively proud and kept the commoners in absolute subjection. For a nobleman to marry a plebeian wife was esteemed a disgrace which only the blood of the culprit could wipe out; if such a marriage took place, the noble relations met and put to death the man who had cast such a slur on their order. It was a crime for a commoner even to approach the person or the house of a nobleman. If a nobleman desired anything of a peasant, he would stand at a distance and call out to him his order or demand; and he would consider his house dishonoured were a commoner to eat or drink in it.[2] A commoner was bound to do deep obeisance to a noble when he met him; to fail in this mark of respect was a capital crime. The nobles and demi-nobles reserved for themselves all the occupations which were esteemed honourable, such as war, voyaging, sea-fishing, canoe-building, and trade with the inhabitants of other islands. Commoners were strictly forbidden to sail on the sea; they Three social ranks. Pride of the nobility. Commoners.

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 57, 62; C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 398. The latter writer says that nothing whatever has been done for the intellectual development of the natives. But the statement is incorrect. The Spanish missionaries sent artizans into the villages to teach the natives useful trades, and the Spanish government set up separate schools for boys and girls in all the important villages, as well as a college in the capital for the higher education of a limited number of pupils. See L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 379.

[2] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 49 *sq.*

occupied themselves chiefly in cultivating the lands of the nobles, and in rendering such other services as their lords and masters might command, such as making or repairing roads, building canoe-sheds, and carrying provisions in time of war. The demi-nobles or middle class (*achaot*) consisted chiefly of younger sons of the nobility who were not destined to succeed their fathers in their hereditary dignity; but they also included nobles who for some grave fault had been temporarily or permanently degraded, by judicial sentence, from the high rank in which they had been born. But such degraded noblemen never sank to the level of commoners, and they could be reinstated in their rank, provided that the appropriate ceremonies were performed.[1]

Demi-nobles.

Inheritance of estates: mother-kin.

The estates of a nobleman were hereditary in his family, but at his death they did not pass to his children; his heirs were his brothers and his nephews,[2] no doubt the sons of his sisters, not the sons of his brothers; for the rule of succession which excludes a man's children is mother-kin, under which a man's brother's children have as little right to succeed as his own children. The system of mother-kin, or inheritance through the mother instead of through the father, has met us in other groups of islands;[3] it would seem to have prevailed universally in Micronesia. In the Marianne Islands the system was so well recognized and so firmly established that it worked without a hitch.[4]

Houses.

According to Le Gobien, the houses of the natives were pleasant enough. They were built of the wood of the cocoa-nut palm, and of another tree peculiar to the islands. Each house comprised four rooms, separated by partitions made of palm-leaf mats. The roofs of the houses were made of the same materials. The rooms were kept clean, and each had its special purpose. The inmates slept in the first and ate in the second; the third served as a storeroom for the fruits and other provisions; the fourth was the workroom.[5]

Ruined stone buildings.

But in some of the southern islands, especially in Tinian, there are numerous remains of stone buildings which have excited the wonder and curiosity of observers, and are

[1] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 364, 365, 370 *sq.*, 378; C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 405 *sq.*

[2] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* p. 50.

[3] Above, pp. 78, 108, 147, 163, 215 *sq.*

[4] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* p. 50.

[5] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 52 *sq.*

supposed by some writers to be the ruins of ancient houses.[1] These curious structures were seen and described by Lord Anson during his stay in the island of Tinian in 1742. His description runs as follows: "There are still remains to be met with on the place, which evince it to have been once extremely populous: for there are, in all parts of the island, a great number of ruins of a very particular kind; they usually consist of two rows of square pyramidal pillars, each pillar being about six feet from the next, and the distance between the rows being about twelve feet; the pillars themselves are about five feet square at the base, and about thirteen feet high; and on the top of each of them there is a semi-globe, with the flat part upwards; the whole of the pillars and semi-globe is solid, being composed of sand and stone cemented together, and plaistered over. This odd fabrick will be better understood, by inspecting the view of the watering-place inserted above, where an assemblage of these pillars is drawn, and is denoted by the letter (*a*).[2] If the account our prisoners gave us of these structures was true, the island must indeed have been extremely populous; for they assured us, that they were the foundations of particular buildings set apart for those Indians only, who had engaged in some religious vow; and monastic institutions are often to be met with in many Pagan nations. However, if these ruins were originally the basis of the common dwelling-houses of the natives, their numbers must have been considerable; for in many parts of the island they are extremely thick planted, and sufficiently evince the great plenty of former inhabitants." [3]

Anson on these ruins.

The particular structure described and figured in Anson's *Voyage* was afterwards seen by a French officer, M. Bérard, who visited the islands with L. de Freycinet in 1819. He

Bérard on these ruins of stone buildings.

[1] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 312 *sqq.*; C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 400 *sq.*; F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 554.

[2] In the plate (No. xxxiv.) to which the writer refers, two rows of quadrangular pyramidal pillars are represented, each row numbering twelve pillars, and each pillar surmounted by a large semi-globe with the flat side up. In the drawing the pillars in each row appear to be set close together at intervals considerably less than six feet, but this may be an error of the artist. The structure is represented standing close to the beach. It seems too massive to have served as the support of a canoe-shed, as was suggested by De Freycinet. See below.

[3] G. Anson, *Voyage Round the World, compiled by R. Walter* (London, 1748), pp. 312 *sq.*

confirms the accuracy of Anson's description. He says: "We admired in Tinian the ruins of an edifice situated about a cable's length from the shore and such that one would have said that it had belonged to a civilized nation. It consists of pyramidal pillars to the number of ten, remarkable for their mass and the regularity of the intervals between them; seven are standing and three are thrown down. The description of them to be found in Anson's *Voyage* is exact; but the roots and branches of trees, which are now, so to say, incorporated in the masonry, give these monuments an aspect different from what they had then; the angles of the pillars are also blunted, and the semi-globes which crown them are not so rounded as then. We do not know to what cause to attribute the fall of the three which are lying on the ground; perhaps it was due to an earthquake. It is true that these constructions have no foundations and are planted on the surface of the ground; but their massive proportions and their peculiar shape are sufficient to secure their stability. Each of the pillars is a single block, composed of lime, sand, and, in some places, of large stones enveloped in one solid mass (*englobées dans un mastic commun*)."[1] Not far off M. Bérard saw many other ruins, but in them the pillars were very much smaller. In one place the pillars were arranged in lines so as to form an avenue more than four hundred yards long. All these structures appeared to be built of the same materials. Similar ruins were observed scattered in great numbers on the mountains and in the plains all over the island, conveying a high idea of the populousness of the islands in former times.[2]

Supposed purpose of these stone buildings.

As to the purpose which these structures may have served, the French officer, M. Bérard, who describes them, has recorded his opinion as follows: "I think that the great pillars which I have described above, could only have belonged to a public edifice, for the difference is too sensible between their dimensions and those of the other similar structures. Most of those which are scattered over the surface of the island are not more than six or seven feet high; some are still smaller. One cannot but recognize that at some distant

[1] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 313 *sq.* [2] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 314.

time they have served as supports for the roofs of houses; in fact, the ruins are still designated in the country as *casas de los antiguos*, 'houses of the ancients.'"[1] According to the local tradition, the largest and loftiest of these rows of pillars were intended to support the roofs of sheds, under which canoes were hauled to shelter them from the sun; but powerful chiefs are said to have built their houses in similar fashion for the sake of display.[2] Indeed a Spanish historian, in his account of the visit of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi to the Mariannes in 1565, more than a century before the occupation of the islands by the Spaniards, says expressly, "that the habitations of the islanders are lofty, neatly built, and well divided in several apartments; and that the whole, raised one stage above the ground, is supported on strong pillars of stone. Apart from these houses where they lived, the natives had sort of sheds for their canoes built similarly on great stone pillars. One of these sheds, situated near the watering-place, contained four of their largest canoes."[3]

Cinerary urns said to have been found on the pillars.

However, against this interpretation of the ruins the reported discovery of cinerary urns in the capitals of the pillars has been alleged as pointing to a different use of the columns.[4] If the report of the discovery is correct, we should apparently have to conclude that the pillars were sepulchral monuments and supported the ashes of the dead. The differences between the size of the columns might in that case be explicable by the differences in the rank of the persons whose remains were preserved in the urns. We have seen that according to Anson the natives believed the monuments to have had a religious origin.[5]

Agriculture.

The ancient inhabitants were diligent cultivators of the soil; in the seventeenth century the whole island of Guam is said to have resembled a garden. The chief objects of cultivation were rice, certain roots, and various fruit trees, including

[1] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 314 *sq.*

[2] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 315.

[3] *Conquist. temp. y spir. de las Filipinas*, por fray Gaspar, I. i. c. 17, quoted by L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 312 *sq.* Compare J. Burney, *Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean*, i. (London, 1803) p. 258, where the passage is similarly quoted as from Gaspar and Grijalva. The reference is to the visit of Miguel Lopez de Legaspi to the Marianne Islands in February 1565.

[4] F. H. H. Guillemard, *Australasia*, ii. 554.

[5] Above, p. 275.

the bread-fruit tree. The agricultural implements of the natives were sticks of hard wood and a hoe with a stone blade; rice they reaped with knives made of sharp shells, and kept it in bags woven of pandanus leaves. Under the blight of Spanish dominion the native agriculture fell into utter decay, though the number of cultivated plants was increased by the addition of maize, tobacco, indigo, and cotton.[1] Again, the ancient inhabitants made a rude sort of unglazed pottery by hand, without the use of the wheel; but this art has been lost by their degenerate descendants or successors.[2] The tools of the ancients in these islands comprised knives of stone or shell, adzes of hard stone with wooden handles, and files made of coral. They plaited mats of pandanus leaves, and were very skilful in working up tortoise-shell into ornaments and a species of currency; this art also has been lost by the modern islanders.[3] The common sort of money, if we may call it so, consisted of pieces of tortoise-shell pierced with holes, and the value of the piece increased in proportion to the number of the holes; though how a dishonest man could be prevented from adding indefinitely to his wealth by the simple process of boring holes in his tortoise-shell money, we are not informed.[4] Bows and arrows were unknown. In war the natives employed wooden spears or javelins pointed with human bones; and they slung stones with great force and skill.[5]

Pottery.

Tools.

Mats.

Tortoise-shell money.

Weapons.

Marriage.

A man was free to marry as many wives as he chose, provided that they were not his near relations. But the custom was to have only one wife. In these islands the women enjoyed the rights which elsewhere are commonly arrogated by men. The wife ruled absolutely in the house. She was the mistress of it and possessed the whole authority; the husband could not dispose of the smallest article without her consent. If he did not show her all the respect that she believed herself entitled to exact, if his conduct was irregular, or his temper bad, his wife either

Rights of women.

[1] C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 401. Compare L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 302 *sqq.*

[2] C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 402.

[3] C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 403. As for the tortoise-shell ornaments (especially necklaces) and money, see L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 310 *sq.*, 486 *sq.*

[4] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 487.

[5] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* p. 55; L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 490 *sq.*

ill-treated him or left him and regained her liberty. For the marriage tie among these islanders was not indissoluble; it lasted only so long as the partners were content with each other; the moment they ceased to be so, they separated. But from whichever side the divorce originated, the wife lost none of her property and the children followed her; if she married again, they looked on her second husband as their father. Thus an unfortunate husband had often the mortification of seeing himself deprived at one swoop of wife and children through the whim of a capricious woman. If his wife proved unfaithful, he might not punish her; all he could do was to leave her, but he might take vengeance on her paramour and even kill him.[1]

Wife's punishment of unfaithful husband.

On the other hand, if the husband was false to his wife, it was in her power to punish him very effectually. In that case she informed all the women of the village of the wrong that had been done her, and they mustered with spears in their hands and the hats of their husbands on their heads. In this warlike array they marched in order of battle to the house of the unfaithful husband. If he chanced to be looking out of the door or the window, his heart must have sunk within him, for the spectacle was well calculated to chill the blood of the boldest. As a preliminary measure and a foretaste of what was in store for him, the termagants began by laying waste his fields and gardens. They rooted up his crops and trampled them under foot; they stripped the trees of their fruit, and spread havoc and devastation all around. Then, as at a signal, they all rushed together at the house, and if the wretched owner had not taken the precaution of decamping in time, they attacked him and drove him out of house and home. Or without rallying all the women of the village to her help, the injured wife might content herself with informing her relations that she could no longer live with her husband. Glad of an opportunity of enriching themselves under pretext of avenging their kinswoman, the family swarmed down like locusts on the house of the guilty spouse, pillaged it, sacked it, and carried off every stick of property that could be found, leaving nothing but the bare walls behind them. Indeed, the husband might

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 59 *sq.*

be happy if they did not pull down the house about his ears, for to that extremity they sometimes proceeded.[1]

Young women kept in men's club-houses.

It is not to be wondered at that, with these terrors of matrimony before their eyes, many young men preferred not to saddle themselves with a wife. Instead they hired or bought young women from their relations for so many pieces of tortoise-shell and lodged them in a club-house, where the unmarried youth lived with them in a state of open concubinage and debauchery.[2] This system of club-houses and concubines was no doubt similar to the one which has existed down to modern times in the Pelew and Caroline Islands.[3] In the Mariannes these club-houses were called *guma ulitao*, that is, "Bachelors' Houses." In the old days they were very common.[4] The young women who lived in them as the paramours of the young men incurred no reproach for so doing, and no blame attached to their parents for permitting them to lead what we should regard as a dissolute life. Fathers had no shame in selling their daughters for this purpose, and, as in the Pelew Islands, mothers even encouraged their daughters to give the rein to their passions and to take up their quarters in a club-house.[5] The members of these clubs (*ulitaos*) used to parade at festivals, carrying painted staves decorated with palm-leaves and fibres of plants, while they sang songs of love in a mysterious and allegorical language, of which none but themselves understood the meaning.[6] The relations of the sexes were extremely loose before marriage;[7] in some parts of the islands it was the established rule that no girl should be a virgin at marriage. In the rare cases where this threatened to happen, a friend of the father lent his services to spare the family the public disgrace.[8]

Loose relations of sexes before marriage.

Petty states.

Before the Spanish conquest the Marianne Islanders were divided into a number of independent or allied tribes, each of which owned several villages; but the customs and institutions were uniform throughout the islands.[9] In all these

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 60 *sq.*
[2] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 61 *sq.*
[3] See above, pp. 160 *sqq.*, 217 *sqq.*
[4] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 180, 368.
[5] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 368 *sq.*
[6] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 184, 369 *sq.*; C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 407.
[7] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 368.
[8] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 370.
[9] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 473.

petty states the government was in substance monarchical, the sovereignty being vested in a paramount chief or king, whose title was *maga-lahi*, that is, "Old Man," "Head of the Family," or "Patriarch," because he was, either actually or presumably, the oldest man of the nobility, who were considered to form a single large family. His wife bore the title of *maga-haga*, that is, "Lady Superior" or "Princess"; and she enjoyed certain privileges which appertained to her rank and sex. Below the king the chiefs took rank in order of seniority, the younger brothers ranking immediately after the king, while below them ranked the king's cousins and nephews. The king was supreme alike in peace and in war.[1] On his death his next brother succeeded him; in default of brothers, the heir to the crown was first a cousin of the late king, and next one of his nephews, in order of seniority. The king's own son could only succeed him in the case when no male relation senior to him survived. Women were incapable of wielding the supreme power. Every noble whose family and wealth enabled him to maintain his independence by force of arms had the right to found a new state and to take with him, not only his relations and allies, but also his retainers, whether demi-nobles or commoners.[2]

Monarchical government.

Succession to the kingdom.

Though women might not aspire to the sovereignty, and were not exactly invested with political authority, they nevertheless exercised so powerful an influence in the councils and tribunals that in point of fact the conduct of public affairs rested in their hands. In their own houses, as we have seen, they reigned supreme; nothing was done without their advice and consent.[3]

Influence of women in public affairs.

§ 4. *Religion: the Doctrine of Souls and the Worship of the Dead*

Our information concerning the religion of the ancient islanders is unfortunately very scanty. According to Le Gobien, they neither recognized nor worshipped any divinity, and until their eyes were opened by the preaching of the

Little known about native religion.

[1] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 474. [2] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 475.
[3] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 475.

Gospel they had not the least notion of religion. They were without temples, without altars, without sacrifices, and without priests.[1] Yet according to some Spanish authorities they believed that the world had been created by a very ingenious man called Puntan, who lived for many years in the imaginary space which existed before the creation. At his death he charged his sisters (for he had sisters) to make the sky and the earth out of his breast and his shoulders, and to fashion the sun and moon out of his eyes, and the rainbow out of his eyebrows.[2]

The creator Puntan.

Belief in the immortality of the soul.

But while Le Gobien denied that the natives had any idea of a divinity, he affirmed that they were convinced of the immortality of the soul, and that they had many superstitions touching it. Thus when any one was dying, they used to put a little basket near his head to receive his parting spirit, and they invited him, on quitting his body, to be so good as to take up his quarters in the basket and to make it his abode for the future, or at least to rest in it whenever he came to see them. Some people adorned their dead, rubbed them with fragrant oils, and carried them about the houses of their relations, in order to allow the ghosts to choose for themselves an abode to their taste, where they could take their ease whenever they returned from the other world to pay their friends a visit.[3]

Paradise and hell.

The natives are even reported to have had some notion of a paradise and a hell, though their ideas on the subject were odd. To hell they gave the name of Zazarraguan or Sassalaguhan, which is said to mean "the House of Chaysi." This Chaysi was the demon who cruelly tormented such as had the misfortune to fall into his power. After they had heard of the Christian doctrine of hell from the Spanish missionaries, they said that the demon burned the souls of the dead in a hot furnace, where he beat them continually. Their paradise was a place of delights, situated somewhere under the earth; its beauty and charm consisted above all in its coco-nut palms, its sugar-cane, and its fruits of delicious taste. But the destiny of a soul in the other world did not depend on the virtue or vice of the deceased

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *Histoire des Isles Marianes*, pp. 64, 65.

[2] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 381.

[3] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* p. 65.

in this present world. Good or evil actions performed on earth availed nothing to make or mar the fortune of the dead in the life hereafter. Everything turned on the manner of death. Those who were unlucky enough to die a violent death went to hell, where they were shut up; whereas such as died a natural death went to paradise to enjoy the trees and fruits which grow there in profusion.[1]

Fear of ghosts.

However, in the opinion of the natives, the souls of the dead, which they called *anitis* or *antis*, were not strictly confined to the other world but returned, in the form of ghosts or spectres, to haunt, ill-treat, and terrify the living. Of such apparitions they stood in great fear. Hence when they applied to the souls of their dead, it was not so much to obtain any favour of them as to prevent them from doing a mischief. For the same reason they kept a profound silence at fishing and observed long fasts, lest the spirits of the departed should harm them or frighten them at night in their dreams, in which they reposed great faith.[2] They thought that if anybody knocked down a pillar of a house, the soul of the dead man who had built the house would come unseen and avenge the deed. According to one account, the devil was believed by them to go about among the living on errands of mischief, but the souls of their ancestors withstood him and came to the help of their descendants in time of danger. The souls of the brave and valiant were stronger than the devil, but the souls of sluggards and cowards were not. It is doubtful whether they allowed commoners the possession of souls. Women were thought to have souls, but their souls were supposed to be feebler than those of men.[3]

Communication with the dead by means of their skulls.

When people desired to communicate with the dead they employed the services of certain wizards (*macanas*), who professed to evoke the spirits of the departed by means of their skulls, which they kept in their houses. These wizards did not worship the skulls which they employed

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 65 *sq.*; L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 381 *sq.*

[2] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 64 *sq.* According to L. de Freycinet (*op. cit.* p. 382, note 1) the correct name of the ancestral spirits was *antis*, not *anitis*, which meant devils or demons. But C. E. Meinicke (*op. cit.* ii. 440) is probably right in thinking that *anitis* and *antis* were the same.

[3] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 382.

for the purpose of necromancy. They contented themselves with enclosing the heads in small baskets, which they left lying about the house without troubling about them or paying them the least attention, except when people came to consult the oracle. At such times these charlatans claimed, by invoking the dead, to be able to command the elements, to restore health to the sick, to control the weather, to grant their customers an abundant harvest and a successful fishing. By these extravagant professions the wizards acquired a high reputation with the ignorant and credulous people, at whose expense they lived.[1] However, according to another account, there were two classes of wizards; one of them did nothing but good, and the other did nothing but evil: the beneficent wizards were noblemen, and the maleficent were commoners.[2] We may suspect that this report emanated from a nobleman who shared the aristocratic prejudices of his order.

The dead invoked in time of need.

But it would seem that in order to communicate with the spirits of the dead and invoke their help or avert their anger, it was not always necessary to call in the aid of these professional necromancers. People invoked the spirits of the dead in times of danger and need. The first appeal to them was made in the tones of ordinary life; for the natives believed that the souls of their ancestors, constantly concerned with the welfare of their descendants, existed at their side; but if the danger still continued, the invocation was repeated in louder and louder tones, till it rose into a shout, uttered with the full force of the lungs in order to attract the attention of the spirits, who had presumably gone to a distance to help their friends elsewhere. "Ho! ho!" they cried, naming the person or persons whose souls they invoked, "now is the time when your help is needed. Help me, if your family was ever dear to you!"[3] If this account is correct, and we have no reason to doubt it, we must conclude that the islanders used to look on the souls of their dead kinsfolk as an ever present help in time of trouble.

When a man wished to settle in another tribe or state,

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 64 *sq.*
[2] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 384.
[3] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 383 *sq.*

he generally sought to take up his abode in a house which had been abandoned on account of a death, and in doing so he endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the family of the deceased, in order that, through their intercession, the soul of the dead man should refrain from doing him a mischief.[1] Propitiating the dead.

The dead were usually buried near the house, but sometimes in the house itself. Some people preferred to deposit their dead in caves near their dwellings; such charnel-houses were called *guma alumsig*, "houses of the dead." The graves were decorated with flowers, palm-branches, shells, and everything that was precious in the eyes of the natives. Moreover, spears or oars were erected on the tomb, according as the deceased had distinguished himself in war or at sea; if he had been eminent in both spheres, the oars and spears were laced together in the form of a trophy. A repast was partaken of at the grave, and the relations of the family were bound to furnish provisions for the entertainment of all who had a right to be present at the obsequies. This obligation was regulated by exact rules, but widowers and widows were exempt from it, though in fact they seldom availed themselves of the exemption. Yet it would appear that at some time after burial the bodies were often disinterred, for we are told that the wizards encouraged the people to keep the bones and skulls of their ancestors, as well as rude effigies of them carved of wood or engraved on bark.[2] An early Spanish voyager, who visited the islands in 1526, informs us that the natives "worshipped the bones of their ancestors, which they carefully kept in their houses, and anointed with cocoa-nut oil."[3] Burial. Funeral feast. The bones disinterred and worshipped.

The mourning lasted seven or eight days or more, and was accompanied by extravagant demonstrations of sorrow, though not apparently by those shocking bodily mutilations which figured so prominently in the mourning rites of the Polynesians.[4] They shed torrents of tears and uttered cries Mourning for the dead.

[1] L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* p. 384.

[2] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 68 *sq.*; L. de Freycinet, *op. cit.* pp. 390-393; C. E. Meinicke, *op. cit.* ii. 404.

[3] J. Burney, *Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean*, i. (London, 1803) p. 139.

[4] See *The Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead*, ii. 133 *sqq.*, 208 *sq.*, 301 *sqq.*, 353, 420 *sq.*

that might pierce the hardest heart. They remained long without eating, and so exhausted themselves by their cries and abstinences that their friends could hardly know them again. The length of their mourning was proportioned to the affection they bore the deceased or to the favours they had received from him. The whole time was spent in weeping and singing mournful ditties. Mothers cut off locks of hair of their dead infants and treasured them carefully; also they wore strings round their necks, on which they tied as many knots as days had elapsed since the death of their dear ones. If the deceased was a great nobleman or a lady of high degree, the expression of the grief of the survivors took a peculiar form. They seemed to fall into a sort of frenzy. They uprooted trees, burned their houses, smashed their canoes, tore their sails, and fastened pieces of them to such of their houses as remained standing. Moreover, they heaped palm-branches on the roads, and set up certain emblems of sorrow in honour of the dead.[1] We may conjecture that these frantic demonstrations of grief were intended, above all, to please and propitiate the powerful ghost by showing him how deeply he was mourned by the survivors.

Importance of the worship of the dead in the Marianne Islands and Micronesia generally.

Taken altogether, the foregoing evidence, slight as it is, suffices to prove that the Marianne Islanders entertained a firm belief in the survival of the human soul after death and in its power to affect the living for good or evil. In their religion the worship of the dead played a prominent, perhaps the leading, part: certainly it appears to have been the only aspect of their religion which attracted the serious attention of their Spanish conquerors. We have found the same belief in human immortality and the same worship of the dead in the other islands of Micronesia. Accordingly, we are justified in concluding that the belief in immortality and the worship of the dead were fundamental features of the ancient Micronesian religion.

[1] Ch. Le Gobien, *op. cit.* pp. 65-70.

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